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Apprenticeships evaluation 2017: employers

Research report

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Chapter 1 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the 2017 Apprenticeships Evaluation Employer Survey.

It coincides with a time of significant change for apprenticeships in England. With the government having committed to expand apprentice numbers to 3 million new starts by 2020, there has been an overhaul of the funding mechanism (such as the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017) as well as the development of new standards and assessment approaches.

The research is designed to provide an understanding of how apprenticeship policy is being implemented on-the-ground and determine the impact they have for employers. It provides vital insight into the standard of apprenticeships on offer, and tracks the progress of this programme over time.

Specifically, the evaluation covers employers' experience of offering apprenticeships: who they took on and to what types of apprenticeship; their motivations for offering apprenticeships; the way the apprenticeships were delivered; the outcomes for their apprentices; and the satisfaction of employers and their future intentions. It also assesses employers' awareness of, and response to, the Apprenticeship Levy, providing an important reference for future evaluations.

The research encompassed 4,004 interviews with employers that had employed apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship between June 2015 and January 2016. All interviews were completed in early 2017, before the changes to apprenticeship funding were implemented.

The report sits alongside that of the simultaneously conducted Apprenticeships Evaluation Learner Survey 2017.

Who employs apprentices?

Taking all employers in England into account (regardless of whether they had recent apprentices or not), apprentices made up a higher proportion of the workforce at mid-size sites (those with 10 to 99 employees), accounting for just over 10 out of every 1,000 employees compared to accounting for a maximum of six out of every 1,000 employees amongst sites at either end of the size scale (those employing either less than 10 or 100 or more employees).

The 'Other services' sector (which includes hairdressers) had the highest proportion of employees who were apprentices, followed by the Education and the Health and Social Work sectors, as in 2015. Regionally, employers in the North East of England had the

highest proportion of apprentices within their workforce with 14 per 1,000 employees on average compared to only three per 1,000 employees amongst London employers. The Health and Social Work sector remained by far the largest employer of apprentices, accounting for over a fifth (22%) of employers.

Overall, two-thirds (69%) of employers with recent apprenticeship completers had only had one apprentice complete between June 2015 and January 2016. Even amongst the largest employers of apprentices (those with 100 or more employees), over two-fifths (43%) had only seen one apprentice complete their training during the seven-month timeframe covered by the evaluation. It appears there may well be capacity for greater numbers of apprentices amongst larger employers, and as payment of the Apprenticeship Levy will now be required from some of this group it will be of interest to monitor future take up amongst these employers.

Only a small proportion of employers (4%) were new to the programme, as in 2015, indicating that the take up of apprenticeships has plateaued. Overall, including these newcomers, around three in ten employers (29%) had only been offering apprenticeships for three years or fewer.

Business confidence amongst apprentice hirers was in-line with 2015, with three-fifths expecting growth in the coming year.

Overall there was a considerable increase in awareness of apprenticeships, with 85% aware their employees' training had been part of the programme compared to only 66% in 2015. As well as possibly reflecting publicity around funding reforms this may be a result of changes to the way the survey was introduced.

What types of apprenticeship are on offer?

The vast majority of employers (90%) continued to offer apprenticeships in only one main subject area. Less traditional, or “newer”, subject areas, including Business, Health and Retail remained the most common apprenticeships offered by employers (31%, 22% and 22% respectively). Compared to 2014, availability of the more “traditional” apprenticeships showed mixed fortunes with an increase in the proportion providing Engineering (from 10% to 16%) but a drop in the proportion offering Construction (from 9% to 6%).

As in 2015 level 2 apprenticeships were the most common, provided by 65% of apprenticeship employers, followed by level 3 (provided by 47%). The picture varied amongst some subject areas though, with ICT and Arts and Media apprenticeships more likely to be level 3 apprenticeships. Providing both level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships was rare (only 13% of employers), and apprenticeships at level 4 or higher were only provided by 3% of employers.

Young people were far more likely to be offered apprenticeships (75% of employers had offered apprenticeships to those aged under 19, 80% to those aged 19-24 and only 46% had made an offer to those aged 25 or above). This low figure is due to those recruiting their apprentices being particularly unlikely to hire someone aged 25 or above (only 37% did so), but as would be expected amongst employers who were providing apprenticeships only to existing employees the proportion with older apprentices was much higher, with 70% having apprentices aged 25 or above.

Why and how are apprentices recruited?

The most common reason for recruiting apprentices, cited by 30% of employers, was because apprenticeships were the type of training most relevant to the needs of their business. Similarly, 19% stated that an apprenticeship was a requirement in the industry, although this varied by subject area. Other common reasons related to areas of recruitment, with 18% recruiting apprentices due to the convenience of having a training provider deal with recruitment and a further 17% saying they found it the best way to aid recruitment and/or retention.

The majority of employers (69%, up from 64% in 2015) had specifically recruited externally for apprentices, while 32% offered apprenticeships to existing staff (down from 38%). A fifth (20%) of all employers had used the Recruit an Apprentice website, which replaced the previous Apprenticeship Vacancies system, with 71% of these users satisfied with the service. There was still room however for further assistance for employers when looking to arrange apprenticeships: the proportion of employers who felt there was sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering apprenticeships had fallen from 71% in 2015 to 68%.

Around two-thirds (64%) of employers were aware of Traineeships (showing little change from 2015), and less than half (42%) of all employers felt they had any knowledge of them. Participation in the Traineeship programme had also decreased, from 19% in 2015, to 16% in the current study. While a sixth of employers had participated or were currently participating in Traineeships, a further 8% intended to do so in the future.

Levels of both awareness and participation in Traineeships were higher amongst larger employers (76% of those with 100 or more employees had heard of Traineeships and 21% had participated).

Keeping apprentices: retention and progression

Retention was at the same level as 2015, with 65% of employers reporting that all their recent apprenticeship completers remained working for them. Retention was lower in

Agriculture and in Arts and Media. Fixed term contracts remained common for new apprentices, used by 73% of employers recruiting their apprentices.

The majority of employers with apprentice leavers (71%) reported that it had been the apprentice's decision. When an employer decided that an apprentice should leave, the most common reason was that the apprentice did not perform at the required level (46%).

In terms of progression, one-sixth (16%) of employers had actually provided training toward a higher or degree level apprenticeship following on from a level 3 apprenticeship, although a third (33%) said they offered this. The proportion offering higher apprenticeships had grown to almost a third (32%, compared to 26% in 2015), with 12% offering degree apprenticeships.

The most frequently cited reason for not offering higher level qualifications, whether or not as a progression from a lower level apprenticeship, was a lack of demand from employees (30%). A lack of awareness and knowledge amongst employers was also a factor; indeed only 31% of employers claimed to have at least some knowledge of higher apprenticeships, despite around half (54%) considering that they might have some relevance for their organisation when prompted.

Delivery, assessment and influence

At least some apprenticeship training was delivered by an external training provider at nearly all employers (94%), although three-quarters (75%) did provide formal training internally themselves. Formal internal training was most commonly provided by employers providing Agriculture or Retail apprenticeships (81% and 83%). Apprenticeship assessment was almost universally outsourced, although 3% of the very largest workplaces (with 250 or more employees) did carry it out internally.

The majority of employers (65%) felt they could influence the apprenticeship in terms of structure, content, delivery or duration, in line with 2015. There was substantial variation by sector; only about half of employers providing Education (51%) and Construction (52%) apprenticeships felt able to exercise any influence. Almost one in five employers (18%) indicated they would like more influence than they had over the structure of their apprenticeships, similar to 2015.

Awareness of the new apprenticeship standards, developed through the Trailblazer programme, has increased considerably. Nearly two-fifths of employers (37%, rising to 68% of employers with 100 or more staff) were aware of the new standards, with 20% stating they had at least some knowledge of them.

There was a small but significant increase in the proportion of employers who had been involved with the new standards, including those who had been consulted about or had

helped develop the new standards, or had had apprentices on the new standards (8% compared to 6% in 2015). Take-up is likely to increase over time, with 16% of all planning to offer these new standards in the next 5 years (up from 8% in 2015).

Recent apprenticeship policy has made it a requirement for employers to ensure their apprentices have at least a basic level of English and maths. Only two-fifths of employers (40%) said all their apprentices had level 2 Maths and English qualifications prior to starting their apprenticeship, but there was demand for this standard of basic skills, with 67% of employers saying it was important.

Satisfaction and future plans

The vast majority (84%) of employers were satisfied with their apprenticeship programme. This represented a small but significant drop from 2015 (87%) but was in line with the 2014 evaluation (83%).

Although at least four-fifths of employers were satisfied with particular aspects of their providers' offer (85% satisfied with their quality of assessment, 84% with their quality of training, 83% with the flexibility of their training / assessment and 81% with the communication they provided), satisfaction with each of these aspects was lower than in 2015.

Employers were more likely to proactively recommend apprenticeships to other employers than in previous years, with 40% indicating they would do so without being asked compared to 37% in 2015. Overall 83% would recommend apprenticeships.

The most commonly reported benefit for employers of providing apprenticeships was the development of skills relevant to the organisation (86%), with further benefits of improved productivity, better quality of product or service, and higher staff morale highlighted by around three-quarters of employers.

Most employers planned to continue offering apprenticeships (84%), matching the high proportion who said this in 2015 (86%) compared with 2014 (78%). Amongst those who planned to continue their offer, or were unsure, almost a third (31%) intended to increase the number of apprenticeships on offer with a further 60% planning to offer the same number.

Apprenticeship funding

Substantial changes to the funding of apprenticeships have been introduced from Spring 2017, as outlined in Chapter 9. The data from this survey shows that among employers already offering apprenticeships 19% will be eligible for this Levy payment (though noting

that a further 14% were unsure if their organisation's UK-wide wage bill exceeded £3m), rising to almost a third in Leisure (35%) and Education (34%).

As employers were interviewed before the funding reform had been implemented this section is based on experiences of the previous system and provides a benchmark for comparison in future. Awareness of the changes was by no means universal, with 60% confirming they had heard about them, rising to 80% amongst those who would be eligible for the Levy.

Close to half (46%) of all employers felt prepared for the changes (rising to 79% of those with 100 or more employees). A lack of awareness over the forthcoming changes was the most common reason for not feeling prepared (38%).

Amongst those who were aware of the funding reforms, there were mixed views on the potential impact to their provision. A fifth (19%) expected to increase the number of apprentices they trained, balanced out by 15% saying they expected a decrease and 2% expecting to stop offering any apprenticeships. Importantly, amongst larger employers who would be eligible for the Levy the expectation was for numbers to increase (44% thought they would offer more places compared to only 9% expecting to offer fewer places), indicating the policy intention to grow the number of apprenticeships provided by the larger employers is likely to be successful. However, there is the potential for funding changes to impact more negatively on smaller employers: only 9% of employers aware of the changes but not eligible to pay the Levy reported a likely increase in apprentice numbers as a result of the funding reform compared to 17% who said that they would decrease numbers and 4% who would stop altogether.

Chapter 2 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the Employer element of the 2017 Apprenticeships Evaluation Survey. A summary of findings from the Learner survey can be found in the corresponding Learner report. The Employer Survey comprised 4,004 interviews with employers who had had individuals complete an apprenticeship between June 2015 and January 2016.

Summary of Policy Context

Apprenticeships remain central to the Government's vision to improve skills, build sustainable growth and to enable individuals to succeed and progress in their careers. The drive to increase apprenticeship numbers has been accompanied by a drive to improve standards. The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE) published in January 2011 described elements to which an apprenticeship should conform, including minimum guided learning hours and the number of these that should be delivered away from the workplace.

The Richard Review (2012) recommended, and subsequent publications¹ have agreed, that the role of employers' in apprenticeships is key to their success. This includes employer influence on the content and standards required of apprenticeships, and the purchasing power to choose the most suitable provision for themselves.

Steps have already been taken to achieve this aim of putting the employer at the heart of the design of apprenticeships, including the creation of new apprenticeship standards designed by employers to meet the needs of their sector and the economy more widely. Groups of "Trailblazer" employers in a range of sectors have led the development of the new standards and assessment approaches. To date more than 1,200 employers have been involved and over 130 standards approved.

Starting in April 2017, the way apprenticeships are funded is also being reformed to increase the role of the employer and to encourage them to invest in their apprentices, and take on more. An Apprenticeship Levy is now payable at 0.5% of the pay bill of employers in the UK whose pay bill exceeds £3m (estimated to be some 2% of all employers). Employers in England will be able to access their Levy funds through a new digital service account to pay for approved apprenticeship training.

¹ Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills (2013), The future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan (2013), English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 vision (2015)

The majority of employers, however, do not need to pay the Apprenticeship Levy, although they will now need to make a 10% contribution toward the cost of apprenticeships they use.

It is hoped that these measures will contribute to an increase in apprenticeship numbers, by driving apprenticeship uptake among larger employers, with a target of 3 million new starts by 2020.

Research Aims

This report forms part of a series of surveys of employers of apprentices going back to 2010/11, providing invaluable insight into how employer views of apprenticeships have evolved over time. This year's survey was carried out immediately before the implementation of apprenticeship funding reforms outlined above, and will therefore also provide a benchmark against which future evaluation data can be compared.

Specifically, the evaluation seeks to understand the reasons employers engage with apprenticeships, how they access the system, the progression and outcomes for apprentices when they finish their apprenticeship and the impact the apprenticeships have on their business. It looks at overall satisfaction with apprenticeships and predicted future involvement. The evaluation also examines the way in which apprenticeships are delivered and the level of influence employers have and would like to have over the training their apprentices receive.

The impact of recent policy changes is an important element of the evaluation, and awareness and uptake of the new apprenticeship standards that have come out of the Trailblazer programme are of particular note. Critically, the evaluation also measures awareness of and reaction to funding reform, including the Apprenticeship Levy, and examines the potential impact this will have on employer engagement with apprenticeships.

Overview of methodology

The employer element to the evaluation involved a telephone survey with 4,004 employers who had had individuals complete an apprenticeship between 1st June 2015 and 31st January 2016. Fieldwork took place in February and March 2017 – ending before the Levy was introduced in April. To ensure comparability with previous studies, the research methodology closely followed that of the previous Apprenticeship Evaluation employer studies.

The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) was used to source employers in scope for the survey. This also contained information on the number of apprentices who had

completed an apprenticeship during the June 2015 to January 2016 period, as well as the subject area and level of each individual's apprenticeship framework or standard. This information was used to stratify the sample, and to weight the data to be representative of employers with apprenticeship completers. More information on the fieldwork, sampling and weighting is available in Appendix A.

Apprenticeship frameworks and standards were classified using the Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) classification for sampling and reporting purposes. The SSA classification is widely used within government, including in the ILR (Individualised Learner Record), and is managed by Ofqual. The SSA Tier 1 titles are shown in the following table alongside the abbreviated description used for each throughout the report. There are further categories in the full SSA Tier 1 classification which are not shown below; this is because no apprenticeships took place in the survey window in these other subject areas.

The same classification was used in the 2015 evaluation, although prior to that "Arts, Media and Publishing" and "Education and Training" were condensed into one group. This year, employers of "Science and Mathematics" apprentices were interviewed for the first time. Although this group may expand in future years, due to the small sample size of employers carrying out apprenticeships in this subject area, they are generally excluded from subject area breakdowns shown in the report.

Table 2.1 Abbreviations of Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) titles used in this report

Sector Subject Area (SSA) title	SSA Tier 1 code	Abbreviation
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	03	Agriculture
Arts, Media and Publishing	09	Arts and Media
Business, Administration and Law	15	Business
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	05	Construction
Education and Training	13	Education
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	04	Engineering
Health, Public Services and Care	01	Health
Information and Communication Technology	06	ICT
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	08	Leisure
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	07	Retail
Science and Mathematics	02	Science

Source: Ofqual

The core measures used to track progress over time remained consistent in the questionnaire, to provide comparability across the years. New questions were added to

reflect recent policy changes: most notably in-depth questions about awareness and likely impact of apprenticeship funding reform (including the Apprenticeship Levy), but also relating to the new apprenticeship standards. The questions regarding reasons for apprentices leaving the company after completing their qualification have also been expanded to capture whether this was initiated by the employer or the individual.

Reporting conventions

The survey upon which this report is based was carried out at site level; that is, both branch sites and head offices were interviewed. Where we refer to “employers” we are referring to a number of workplaces rather than a number of organisations, unless otherwise specified.

Throughout the report, unless otherwise specified, “recent apprentices” refers to apprentices who ended their training within the survey window for the evaluation, which covered the eight months from June 2015 to January 2016.

We also make reference to ‘traditional’ and ‘newer’ subject areas for apprenticeships. Traditional subject areas, which for the purposes of this report (and in line with the previous 2015 Apprenticeship Evaluation) are taken to comprise the subject areas of Construction and Engineering, have had a long history of engagement with apprenticeships. All other subject areas are classified as ‘newer’.

Each chapter contains a summary of findings at the top, followed by a list of key, statistically significant changes between the 2015 and the 2017 survey.

Chapter 3 Who employs apprentices?

This chapter profiles those employers with recent apprentice completers, and compares them to those interviewed in the previous Apprenticeship Evaluation.

Key findings

Employer profile

- **Over one-fifth of employers with recent apprentices operated in the Health and Social Work sector**, making this by far the largest sector, consistent with 2015, and there was little change in the sectoral distribution of apprentice employers.
- As a proportion of *all* workplaces in each sector, employers in the Education sector were the most likely to have recent apprentice completers (19%), followed by Health and Social Work (17%).
- Two-fifths of employers (39%) had 25 or more employees at the site, slightly down from 44% in 2015.
- **Two-thirds (69%) of employers had only one apprentice recently complete their training**, in line with 2015; even among sites with 100 or more employees, nearly half (43%) had only one apprentice complete with the 8 month survey window.
- The proportion of employers who had begun offering apprenticeships within the past three years was 29%, significantly up from 25% in 2015.
- Three-fifths (60%) of employers expected their business to grow over the next 12 months, in line with 2015.

Ratio of apprentices to overall employee numbers

- **Considering the entire England employer population, whether or not they had recent apprentices, mid-size sites (with 10 to 99 employees) had the highest ratio of apprentices to overall staff numbers** (between 10 and 11 apprentices per 1,000 employees). This was around twice the level found among those with 100 or more employees (5 per 1,000), or those with one to nine employees (6 per 1,000), and was consistent with 2015.
- By sector, Other Services (which includes hairdressers and barbers) provided more apprentices per 1,000 employees than any other sector, followed by Education and Health and Social Work. This showed little change from 2015.
- There was also considerable regional variation. Employers in London had just 3 apprentices per 1,000 employees, compared to 14 per 1,000 employees among employers in the North East of England.

Awareness of apprenticeships among employers

- Most employers were aware their employees' training had been an apprenticeship (85%).

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

Sector and size profile

- The sector and size profile remained broadly consistent to 2015, although two-fifths of employers with recent apprentices (39%) had 25 or more employees at the site, down from 44% in 2015.
- The proportion of employers who had begun offering apprenticeships within the past three years was 29%, significantly up from 25% in 2015, suggesting a recent increase in uptake.

Awareness

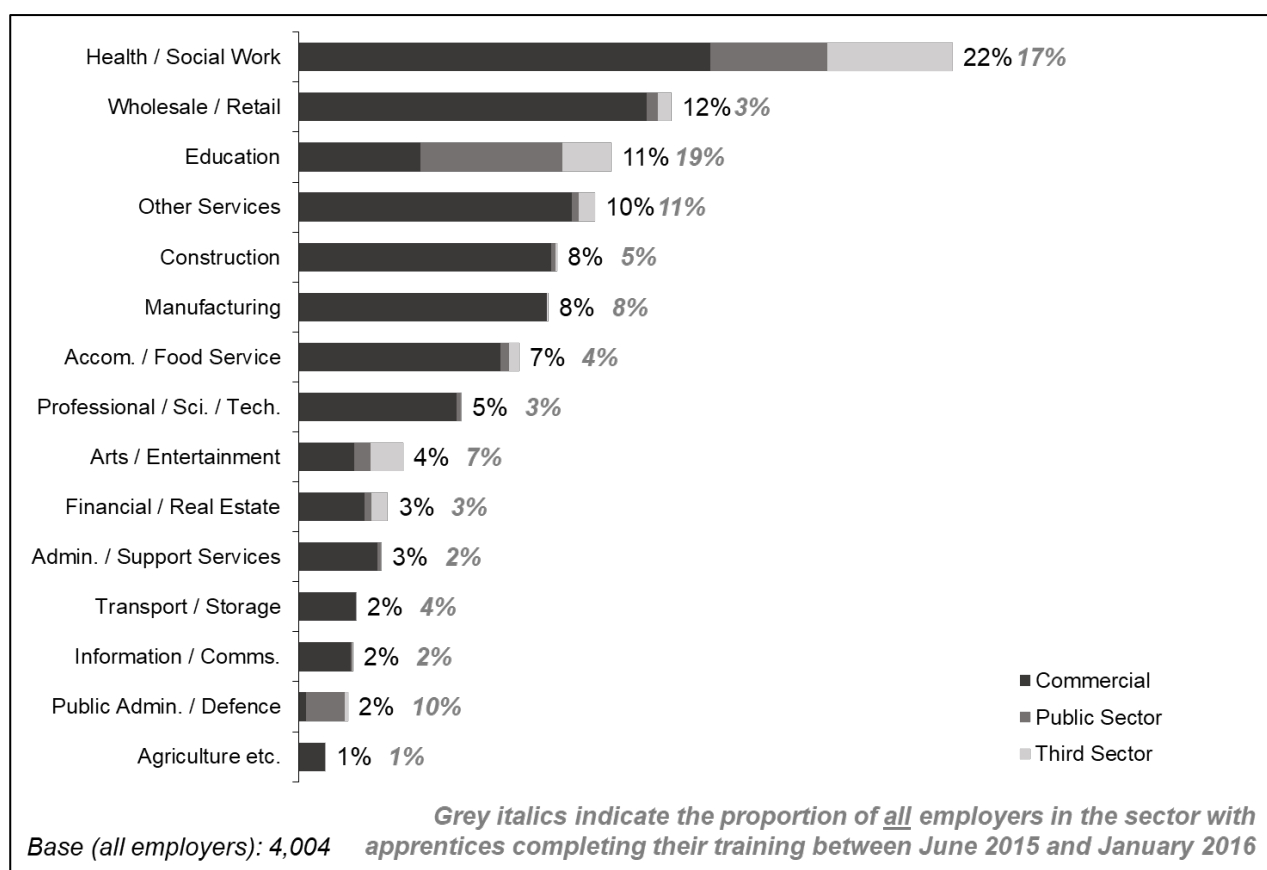
- Just 15% were not aware that they were offering apprenticeships, compared to 31% in 2015. Part of this increase is likely to relate to the increase in publicity associated with the apprenticeship funding reforms and Apprenticeship Levy, including materials employers might have received from DfE about the changes. However, changes were also made to the survey process compared to 2015, which may have further increased measured awareness levels.

Sector and size profile

The sector profile of employers with recent apprentices remained broadly unchanged from 2015. As in 2015 Health and Social Work was the single largest sector, accounting for just under a quarter (22%) of apprentice employers. Other prominent sectors included the Wholesale and Retail sector (12%), Education (11%), Other Services (10%, of which a large component is hairdressing and barbering), Construction (8%), Manufacturing (8%), and Accommodation / Food Service (7%).

Figure 3.1 shows employers of apprentices broken down by sector, and also provides a breakdown within those sectors into commercial, public sector and third sector employers. As can also be seen in the chart, employers providing apprenticeships tended to be mostly in the commercial sector (77%). Employers of apprentices in the public sector (12% of apprentice employers) tended to be in specific sectors – Education, Health & Social Work and Public Administration & Defence. Those in the third sector (9% of apprentice employers) were found particularly in Health & Social Work, Education, and Arts & Entertainment.

Figure 3.1 Sector profile of employers with recent completers



Looking at subject areas of apprenticeships, rather than the sector of the employer, most subject areas are provided predominantly by private sector employers, even including Health apprenticeships. The key exception is the education subject area, for which 85% of apprentice employers are in the public sector, and just 6% in the private sector. Although as shown in the chart above, commercial sector education organisations do employ apprentices in significant numbers, these are predominantly in non-education subject areas.

The grey italics on the chart above show the percentage of all workplaces in each sector that had recent apprentices. The sectors where apprenticeships were provided by a particularly large proportion of employers were Education (19%), Health & Social Work (17%), Other Services (11%), and Public Administration and Defence (10%). Meanwhile the Wholesale & Retail sector (despite making up 12% of employers with apprentices) was heavily under-represented, with only an estimated three per cent of all employers in the sector having recent apprentice completers.

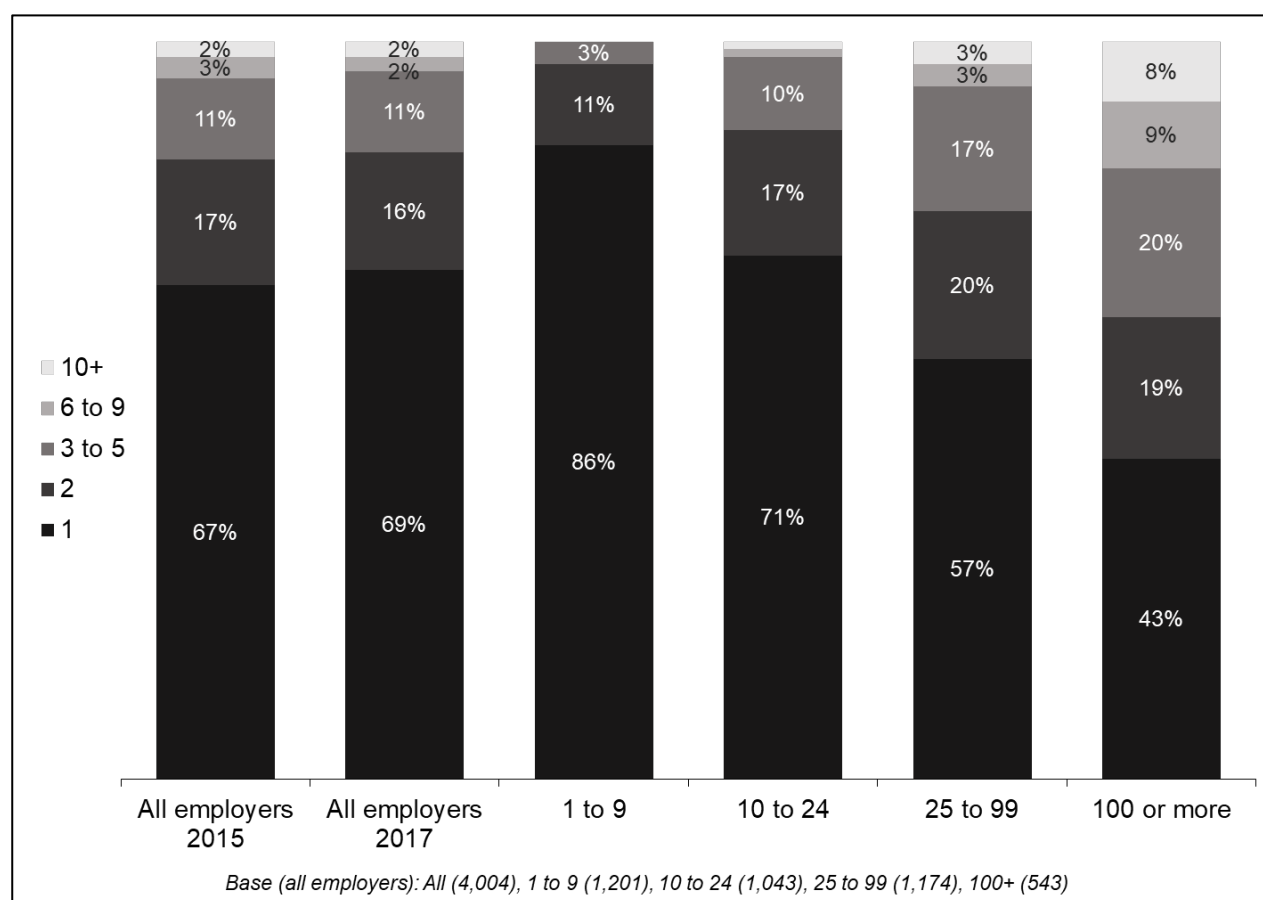
Two-fifths of employers with recent apprentices (39%) had 25 or more employees at the site interviewed. This is less than in the 2015 evaluation (44%), but higher 2014 (34%).

Number of apprentices

The majority of employers (69%) had only one apprentice recently complete their training in the survey window; only 2% had 10 or more complete their training. This profile was very close to that found in 2015.

Although this is partly because the population of employers offering apprenticeships is dominated by small companies, even at large sites with 100 or more employees, a substantial proportion (43%) had only one recent apprentice completer, and less than a tenth (8%) had ten or more, as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Number of recent apprentice completers: by size of site



Apprentices as a proportion of employees

When building a picture of apprenticeship use by employers in England, it is important not only to look at the number of employers involved, but to consider the number of apprentices that those employers have, compared to the number of people they employ. Comparing the number of recent apprentices with the number of employees at the time of the survey, the number of apprentices per 1,000 employees varied from 280 at sites with two to nine employees to 17 at sites with 100 or more employees.

However, this does not provide a full picture of the relative participation in apprenticeships of different sizes of employer, because the survey dataset excludes those sites with no recent apprenticeship completers. To take these employers into account, IDBR data can be used alongside survey data to show the proportion of all sites of each size that had recent apprentices, shown in the third column of Table 3.1.

A much larger proportion of sites with 100 or more employees (29%) had apprentices than sites with two to nine employees (2%). Hence, although small employers who did have apprentices employed a much larger number relative to their size, they were far less likely to have had any in the first place.

The final column brings this information together to show the number of apprentices per 1,000 current employees at the average workplace of this size across England, taking into account those sites without any recent apprentice completers. This shows that it was the mid-size sites (with 10 to 99 employees) which tended to have the largest proportion of apprentices; around twice that found among large sites with 100 or more employees. This is closely in line with the findings from 2015; there were no significant changes seen.

Table 3.1 Number of recent apprentices, as a proportion of employees

	Base	Employers with recent apprentices (survey results)		All employers (sites with and without apprentices)	
		Size of site: 2017 survey profile	Apprentices* per 1,000 employees	% of all workplaces of this size with apprentices*	Apprentices* per 1,000 employees
2 to 9 staff	1,110	29%	280	2%	6
10 to 24 staff	1,043	29%	106	11%	11
25 to 99 staff	1,174	28%	54	19%	10
100+ staff	543	11%	17	29%	5
Total	4,004	100%	154	6%	9

**Apprentices completing framework in survey window (June 2015 to January 2016) vs. current employees*

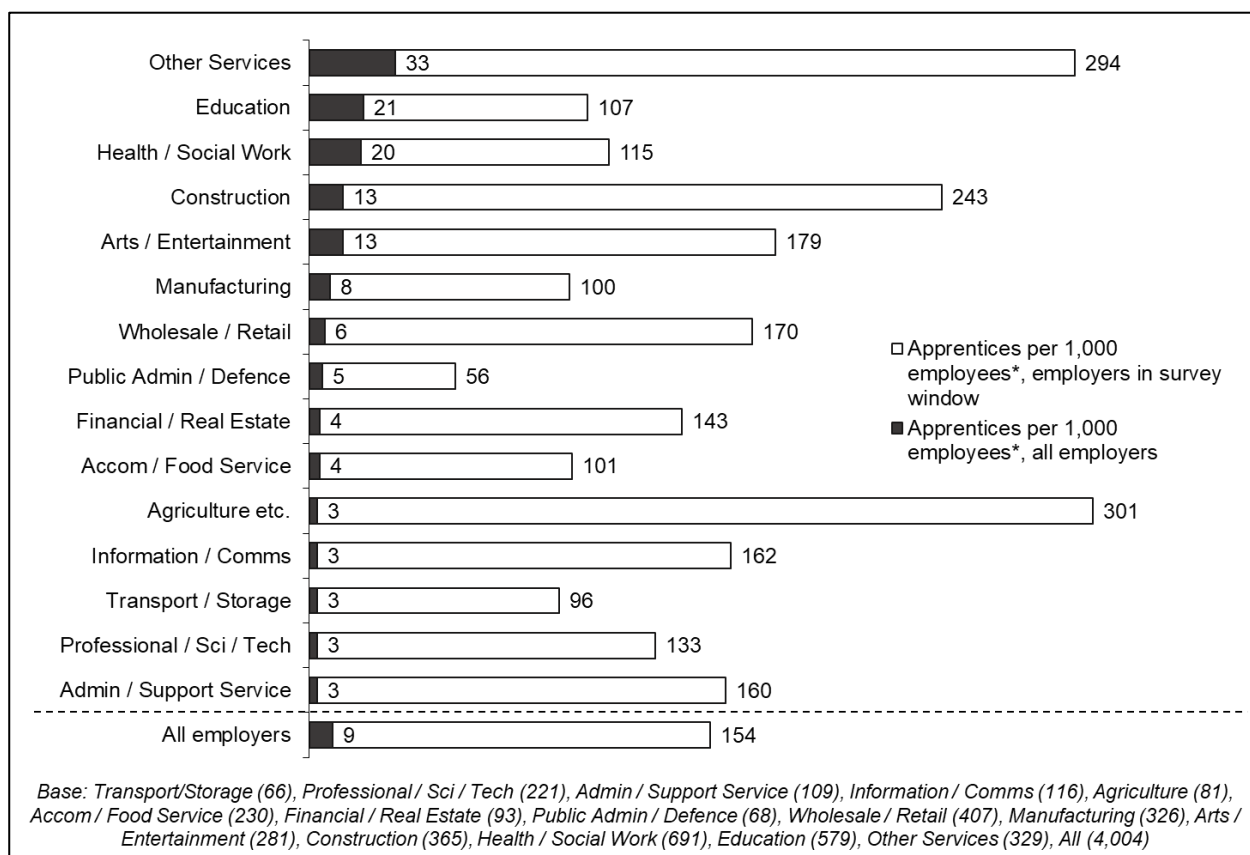
This finding clearly has policy relevance, showing that the burden of funding and training apprentices currently falls particularly upon those mid-sized employers with 10 to 99 employees at a site. The new Apprenticeship Levy has been designed partly with this in mind, creating a financial incentive for larger employers to increase their usage of apprenticeships. Clearly, although a large proportion of large employers have apprentices already, the potential exists for a significant increase in the intensity of

apprenticeship usage among the largest businesses, which could generate a large increase in apprentice numbers nationally.

A similar analysis by sector is shown in the following chart. The hollow bars show the number of recent apprentices per 1,000 current employees in each SIC2007 sector amongst those employers with recent apprentices. The solid bars take into account the estimated proportion of employers with no recent apprentices (again using IDBR data) to provide an estimate of the average number of recent apprentices per 1,000 current employees for all employers across England.

The patterns are quite different; while employers in the Agriculture sector with apprentices tended to have a large number of apprentices compared to the size of the workforce (partly because sites in this sector tend to be small), the average across the sector is very low because the overwhelming majority of sites had no apprentices at all. The sector with the highest usage of apprenticeships, based on the number of apprentices per 1,000 employees (based on all employers in the sector) was Other Services (33, per 1,000), which includes hairdressers and barbers, followed by the Education (21 per 1,000) and Health and Social Work sectors (20 per 1,000).

Figure 3.3 Number of recent apprentices, as a proportion of employees, by industrial sector (SIC2007)



* Apprentices completing framework in survey window (June 2015 to January 2016) per 1,000 current employees

Clearly these results also have policy implications, potentially identifying sectors where there is particular growth potential. For example, in Agriculture very few employers have apprentices, so the number of apprentices per 1,000 employees for the sector as a whole (3) is well below the average for all employers (9). However, among employers with apprentices, the number of per 1,000 employees is very high, at 301 per 1,000. Therefore, the challenge in this sector is primarily to increase the proportion of employers engaged with the programme, rather than to increase the number of apprentices used by those already involved.

Meanwhile, the reverse is true in Education; although the number of apprentices per 1,000 employees is very low among employers with apprentices (107 per 1,000), the large proportion of employers using the programme in this sector means that overall the sector is among those with the highest proportion of apprentices (21 per 1,000). Here, there might be more scope instead to encourage employers already engaged to train more apprentices.

There is also significant variation in the number of apprentices per 1,000 employees at the average employer in each region, ranging from 3 per 1,000 employees in London to 14 per 1,000 in the North East, as shown in Figure 3.4. This is caused only by variation in the proportion of employers using apprenticeships, rather than the number of apprentices they each recruit relative to their size, which varies very little by region.

Figure 3.4 Number of recent apprentices, as a proportion of employees, by region (ONS)



* Apprentices completing framework in survey window (June 2015 to January 2016) per 1,000 current employees

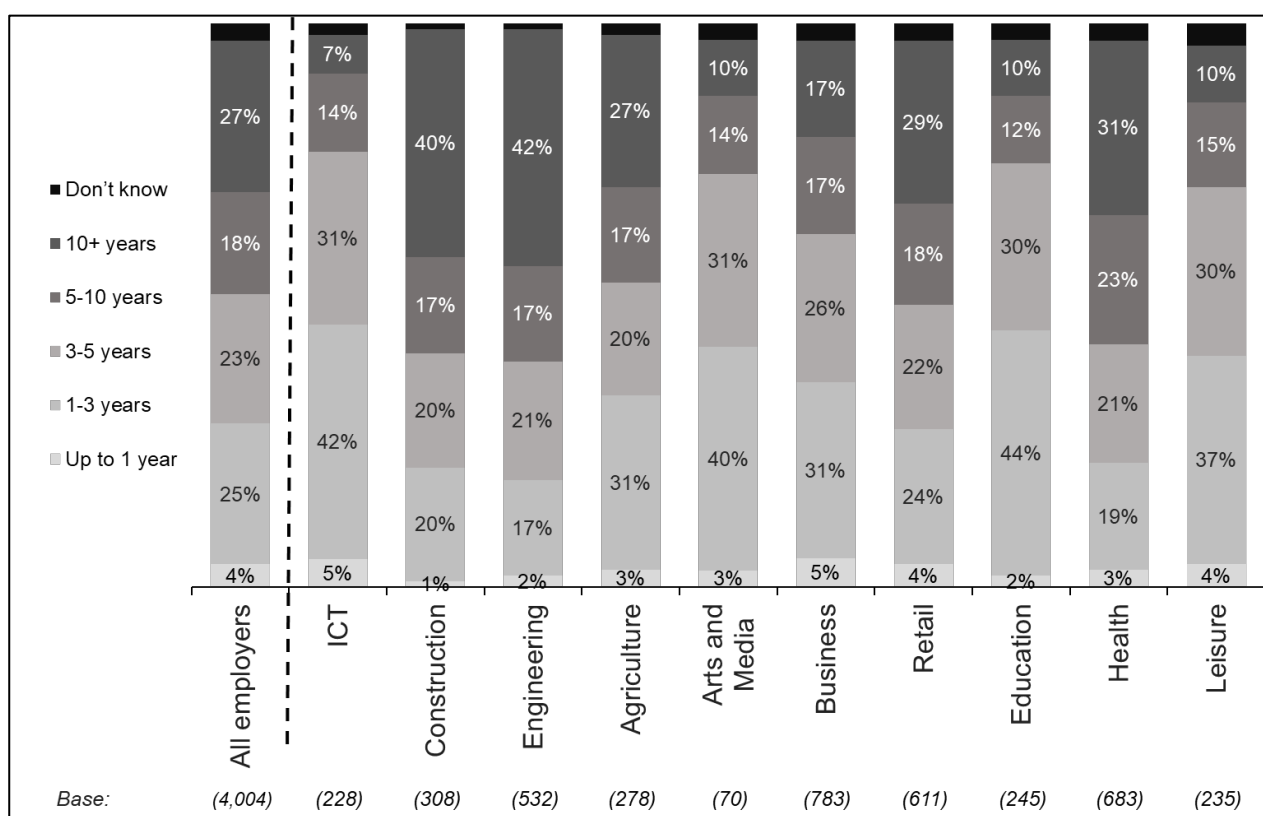
Length of time offering apprenticeships

Around three in ten (29%) employers were relatively new to apprenticeships, having offered them for 3 years or fewer, a significant increase since 2015 (25%). This supports the overall picture of ongoing growth in the number of apprentice employers.

Employers with only one apprentice completing in the survey window were more likely to be newer to apprenticeships than those with more than one. About three in ten (29%) had been offering apprenticeships for 3 years or fewer, compared to 19% of employers who had had more than one apprentice in the given time period. This may be because employers start small when introducing an apprenticeship scheme and build their numbers over time if they find it suits them.

There was significant variation in the length of time apprenticeships had been offered by main subject area, with employers offering the more “traditional” subjects (such as Construction and Engineering) more likely to have been offering apprenticeships for longer than those offering the “newer” subjects such as Education, ICT, Leisure and Arts and Media. Figure 3.5 shows the variation by subject area.

Figure 3.5 Variation in length of time apprenticeships offered for by subject area



Growth Outlook

Private sector employers were asked to give an overview of their business outlook over the next 12 months. Overall six in ten private sector employers (60%) said they expected their business to grow over the next 12 months. Whilst this is still lower than the levels seen in 2014, when 66% expected to grow, it is similar to the proportion seen in 2015 (59%). Just 3% of employers expected their business to contract, leaving 35% who expected their business to remain about the same size.

Growth expectations were stronger among larger employers, as shown below in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Growth outlook by size of employer (row percentages)

	Base	Grow Significantly	Grow slightly	Remain about the same	Contract
1-9 staff	1,055	11%	45%	38%	4
10-24 staff	801	16%	43%	37%	3
25-99 staff	731	19%	46%	32%	1
100+ staff	273	23%	43%	28%	3
Total	2,885	16%	45%	35%	3

**Total Base includes 43 employers who did not know their size band. Row percentages do not sum to 100% due to "Don't know" responses not being shown.*

Awareness of apprenticeships

Employers were asked whether they were aware that the training their employees were completing was an apprenticeship, for each of the subject areas they had apprentices in. Awareness was high, with 85% of employers in total aware they were providing apprenticeships in at least some of the subject areas documented on the ILR. This comprised 81% of employers who were aware that their staff were completing apprenticeships across all of the subject areas they provided in the survey window, and a further 4% aware of at least some of their apprenticeship offering.

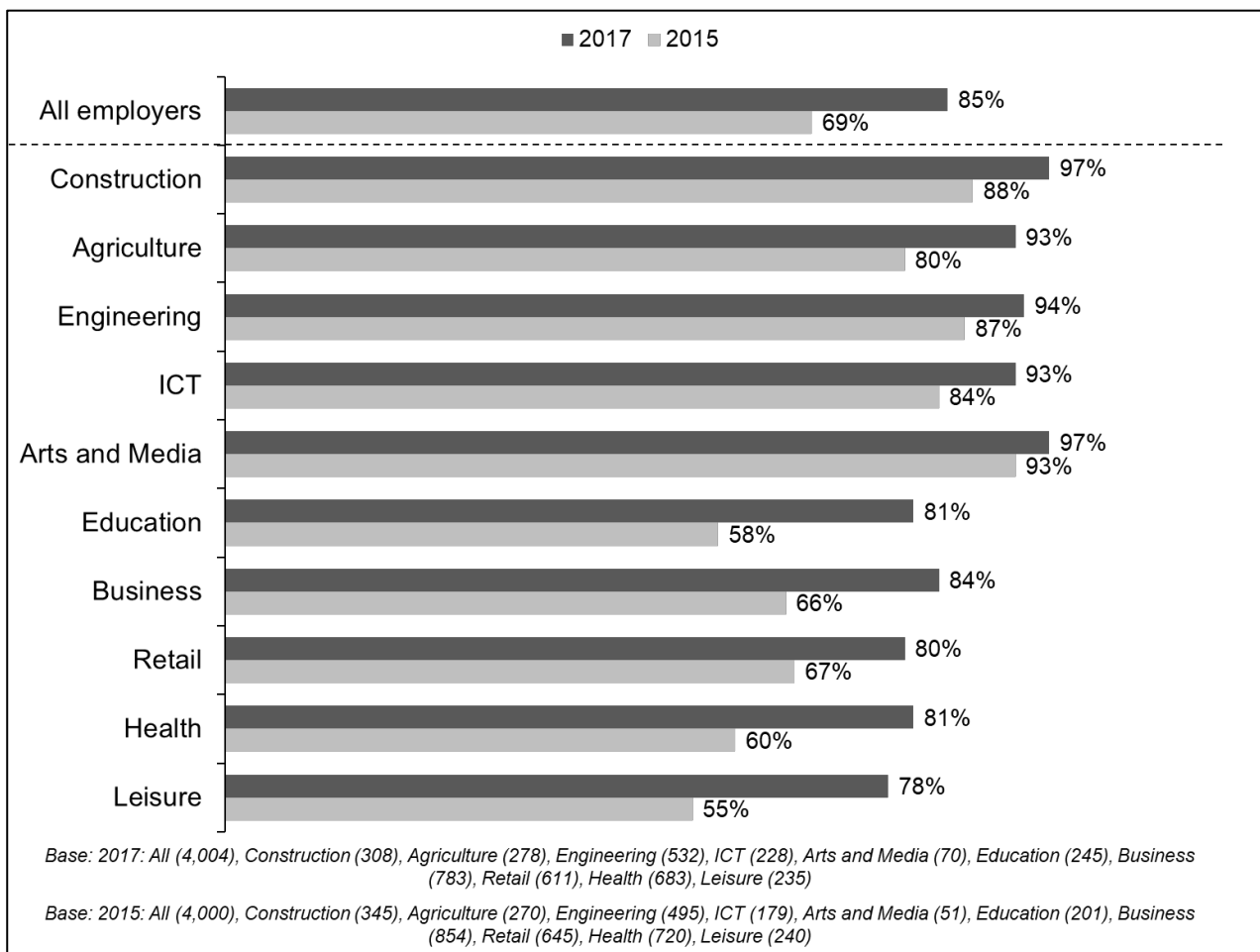
This is a large increase on 2015 when only 66% were aware of staff completing apprenticeships across all subject areas and 3% aware some were (totalling 69% aware they were offering any apprenticeships). Part of this increase is likely to relate to the increase in publicity associated with the apprenticeship funding reforms and Apprenticeship Levy, including materials employers might have received from DfE about

the changes. However, changes were also made to the survey process compared to 2015, which may have further increased measured awareness levels².

Awareness was much lower among employers who only offered apprenticeships to their existing staff (64%) compared to those who recruited all of their apprentices from outside the organisation (95%).

Awareness was also higher among employers primarily offering apprenticeships in more “traditional” subject areas (95%) compared to “newer” subject areas (83%). It is these newer subject areas that have seen the largest increase in awareness since 2015; Figure 3.6 shows the difference in awareness between the subject areas in 2017 and 2015.

Figure 3.6 Awareness of apprenticeships by subject area – time series



² More measures this wave were taken to ensure that at large businesses we are talking to the correct site within the organisation, and more information about the apprenticeship was provided in the screening process, which may have assisted recall of the training among respondents.

Chapter 4 What types of apprenticeship are on offer?

Apprenticeships were offered in a wide variety of subjects and at a range of levels; this chapter explores the variety of training provided.

Key findings

Subject areas provided

- The most common subject areas provided by employers, according to the ILR were **Business (31%), Health (22%) and Retail (22%)**, as in 2015. Since 2014 the proportion of employers offering Engineering apprenticeships has increased from 10% to 16% while the proportion offering Construction over this period has dropped from 9% to 6%.
- **Most employers (90%) provided apprenticeships in only one subject area**, consistent with 2015.
- Two-thirds (65%) of employers provided apprenticeships at level 2, and close to half (47%) some at level 3, in line with 2015. Only one in eight (13%) provided apprenticeships at both levels. On top of this, 3% provided apprenticeships at level 4 or higher.
- Construction, Retail and Agriculture subject areas were dominated by level 2 apprenticeships, whereas ICT and Arts and Media apprenticeships were more likely than average to be delivered at level 3.

Age of apprentices

- **Employers most commonly offered apprenticeships to people aged 19-24 (80%) or under 19 (75%)**. Less than half offered apprenticeships to those aged 25 or over (46%).
- As one would expect, those providing apprenticeships to existing employees tended to have older apprentices: among those only offering apprenticeships to existing staff, 70% had apprentice completers who were aged 25 or over at the start of their course, compared to 37% of those who recruited specifically for an apprenticeship role.
- The most common reasons for not offering apprenticeships to people aged under 19 were that they could not employ people of that age in their workplace (32%, rising to 44% among those in the Health and Social Work sector), and that they had not had suitable applicants from that age bracket (28%).

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

Types of apprentices employed

- The number of employers of apprentices increased from 84,794 in 2015 to 88,253 in 2017, an increase of 4%.
- There were falls from 2015 to 2017 in the number of employers with completers in Business (34% to 31%) and Construction (7% to 6%), and increases in Engineering (13% to 16%) and ICT (3% to 4%).
- The proportion of employers with level 2 or 3 completers offering higher or degree apprenticeships significantly increased from 2015 to 2017, from 13% to 18% of apprentice employers.
- There was no change in the proportion of employers taking on apprentices of different ages; but employers who do not currently offer apprenticeships to under 19s were more likely to say that the reason was the need for a suitable opening to arise within the company (13%, up from 8% in 2015).

Subject Areas

The hundreds of frameworks and standards of apprenticeship available are classed into broad 'Sector Subject Areas' by the Department for Education. Data on which frameworks and standards employers have provided to recent completers was taken from the ILR, which records all apprenticeships carried out in England. This is shown in the table below.

Since 2015 there has been an increase in the overall number of employers with recent apprenticeship completers, from 84,794 in 2015, to 88,253 in 2017, an increase of 4%.

Although the range of subject areas covered has broadened over the last few years, three subject areas continue to stand out as being particularly widespread. A third of employers (31%) provided Business frameworks, while just under a quarter provided each of Health (22%) and Retail (22%).

However, since 2014 there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of employers providing apprenticeships in Engineering – up from 10% to 16%, while Construction has reduced as a proportion from 9% to 6%, indicating a fall in the absolute number of employers using these apprenticeships.

Table 4.1 Employers with recent apprentice completers in each subject area

Subject Area	2017 employers		2015 employers		2014 employers
	%	Number*	%	Number*	%
Agriculture	3%	2,500	3%	2,400	3%
Arts and Media	*%	400	*%	300	n/a
Business	31%	27,400	34%	29,200	34%
Construction	6%	5,000	7%	6,100	9%
Education	2%	1,700	2%	2,000	n/a
Engineering	16%	14,500	13%	11,300	10%
Health	22%	19,300	23%	19,200	22%
ICT	4%	3,100	3%	2,500	3%
Leisure	3%	2,500	3%	2,700	3%
Retail	22%	19,300	22%	18,800	23%
Science	*%	100	n/a	*	n/a
All employers		88,300		84,800	

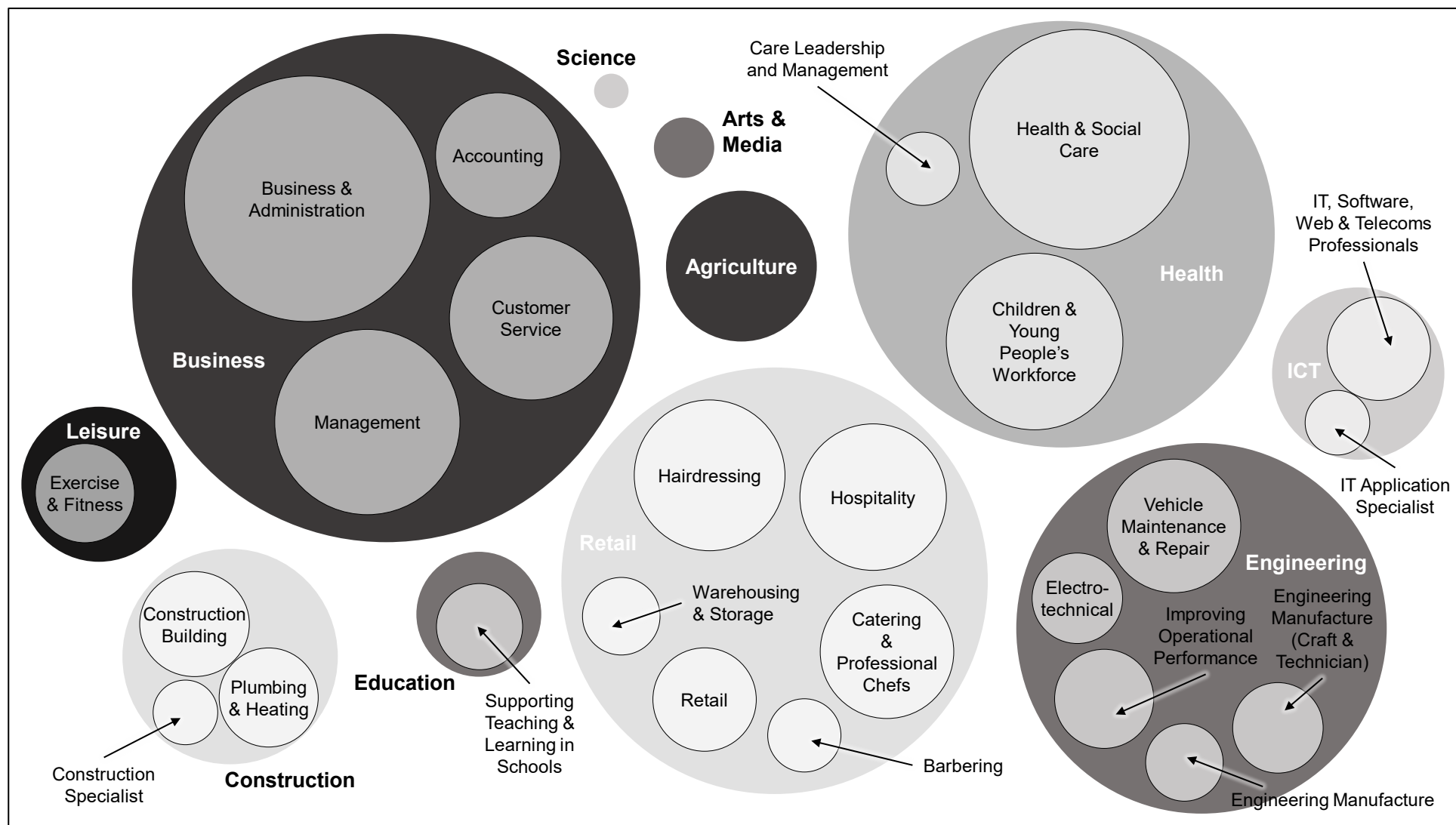
Source: Individualised Learner Record (2013 to 2016) * rounded to the nearest 100
Percentages sum to greater than 100%; employers can have completers in multiple subject areas.

Specific frameworks and standards

The subject areas shown in the previous table are quite broad, and while some are dominated by one or two specific apprenticeships, they often contain a wide range of specific frameworks and standards. For context, the chart overleaf shows the 25 individual apprenticeship frameworks and standards most often provided by employers within their subject area grouping. This is again based on the ILR extract used to weight the survey data.

The largest single apprenticeship is Business and Administration, used by 12,900 employers (15% of employers with apprentices), followed by Health and Social Care (10,400 or 12%). Five other apprenticeships involve more than five per cent of employers: Management (7,200 or 8%), Children & Young People's Workforce (6,500 or 7%), Customer Service (5,700 or 6%), Hairdressing (4,800 or 5%) and Hospitality (4,600, representing 5% of employers with apprentices). These were also the largest apprenticeships in terms of employer numbers in 2015. There are also hundreds of other frameworks and standards, some involving just a handful of employers, although in a minority of cases these employers (particularly in the Engineering subject area) employ a very large number of apprentices each.

Figure 4.1 Specific frameworks and standards within subject areas; number of employers involved



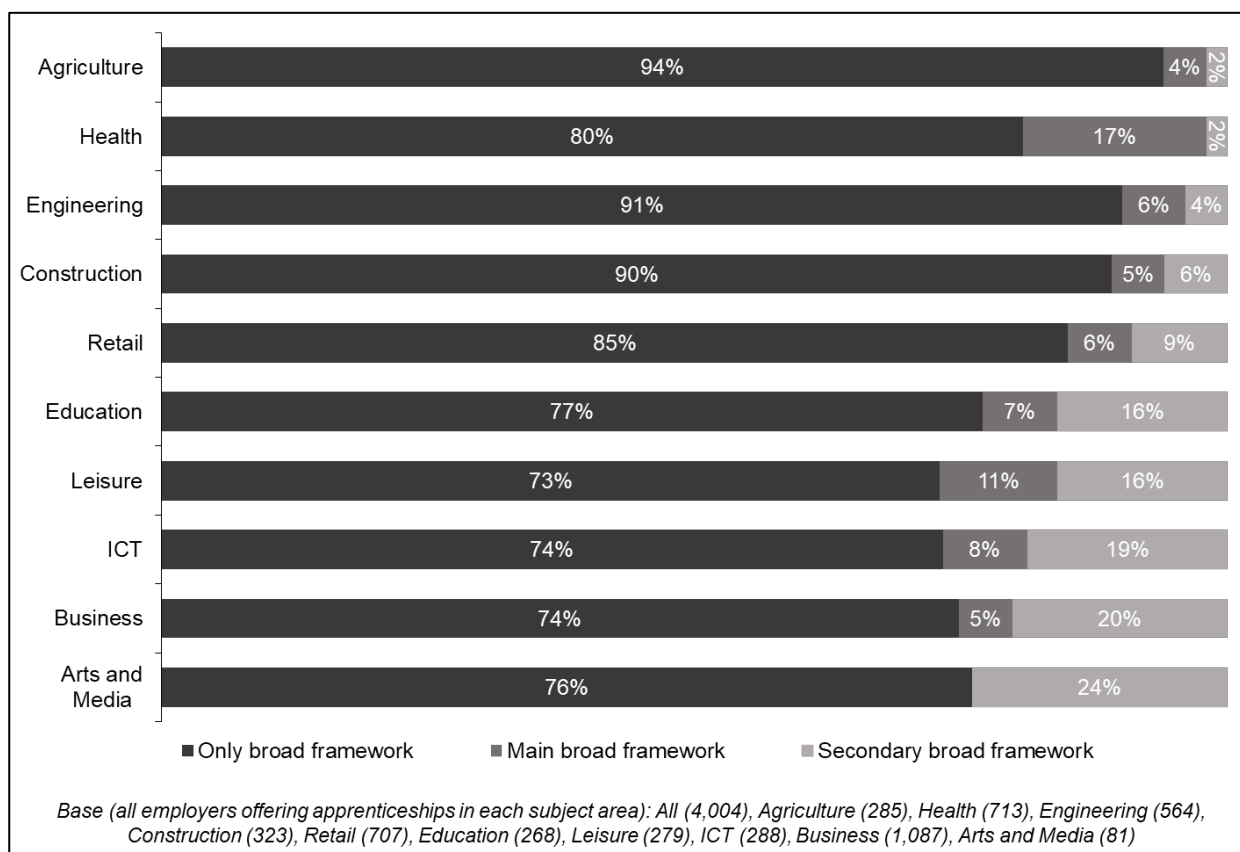
Source: Individualised Learner Record (2015/16)

Subject areas – all provided, and main subject areas

In the employer survey, most employers (90%) provided apprenticeships in only one subject area, exactly in line with both 2015 and 2014. The remaining ten per cent of employers were asked which framework or standard they considered to be most important to their business; we refer to the subject area of this framework as their ‘main’ subject area throughout this report. The chart below shows that some subject areas were much more likely to be secondary to the employer than others, in line with previous evaluations.

In particular, Arts and Media (24%), Business (20%), and ICT (19%) were more likely than average to be considered secondary subject areas (i.e. the employer also provided apprenticeships in different subject areas and these other areas were considered more important). This reflects, in part, their applicability to a wide range of businesses in a supporting role, including potentially Arts and Media apprenticeships as a tool for marketing or business promotion. In contrast, fewer than 5 per cent of employers using apprenticeships in the Agriculture, Health or Engineering subject areas had another subject area they considered more important to the business.

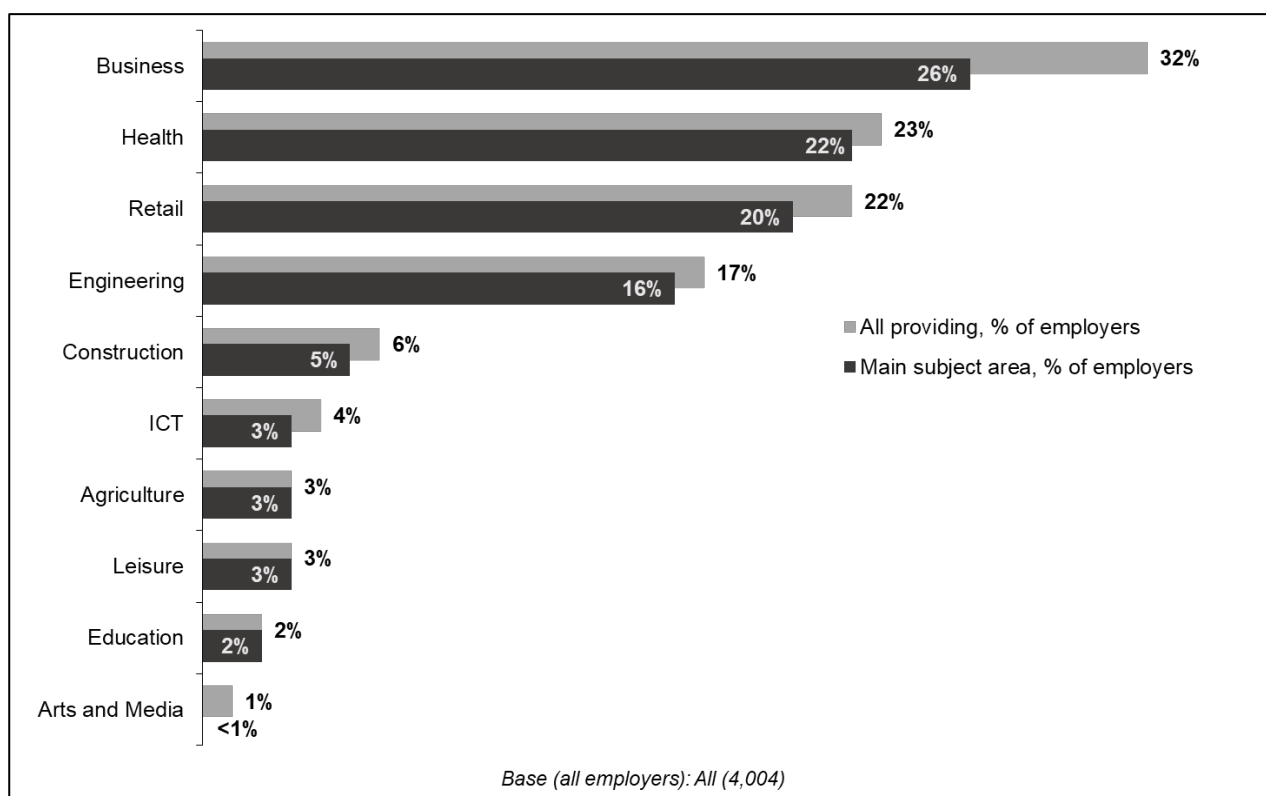
Figure 4.2 Subject areas: Only, main or secondary subject area



For the remainder of this report, and in line with reports from previous years, we report on the basis of main subject area as selected by the employer, rather than including secondary subject areas.

The chart below compares the proportion of employers providing each subject area of apprenticeship with the proportion identifying that subject area as the most important to the business.

Figure 4.3 Subject areas: All providing, and all providing as their main subject area



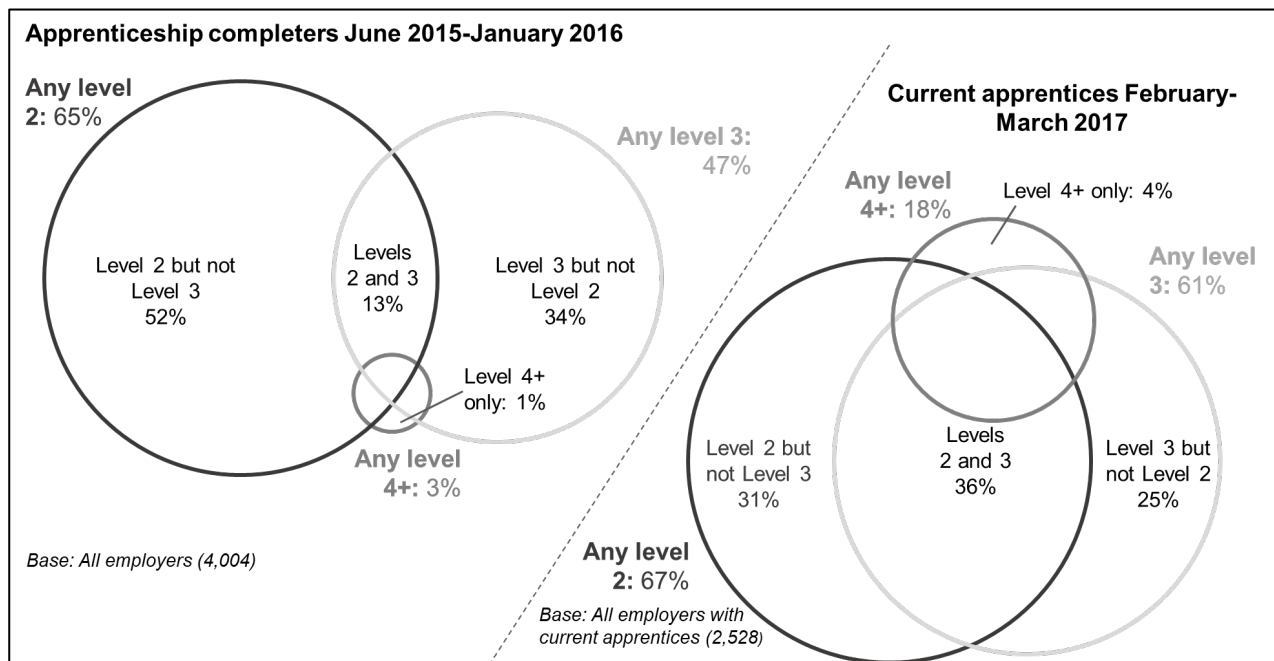
Levels of apprenticeship

Consistent with previous years, the level of apprenticeship most commonly completed within the survey period was a level 2 apprenticeship. Almost two-thirds (65%) of all the employers in the survey had an individual complete an apprenticeship at this level between June 2015 and January 2016. This was the same as the figure seen in 2015. Almost half (47%) had had completions at level 3, also broadly in line with the proportion seen in 2015 (49%). As Figure 4.4 shows, only 13% of employers had completers at both levels. Incidence of completion of higher level apprenticeships were less common, with only 3% of employers having a completer at level 4 or higher in the survey window (1% at level 4, and 2% at level 5). Around two-thirds of these also had completers at levels 2 or 3, leaving 1% who had only had higher level completers.

Looking at the figures for current apprentices, also shown in Figure 4.4, a different picture emerges. Employers interviewed were almost as likely to have level 3 apprentices as level 2 apprentices (61% had level 3 apprentices at the time of the survey, 67% had level 2). This may reflect that level 3 apprenticeships are of longer duration; hence within our eight month sampling window, completions would occur more often for level 2 than level 3 apprenticeships.

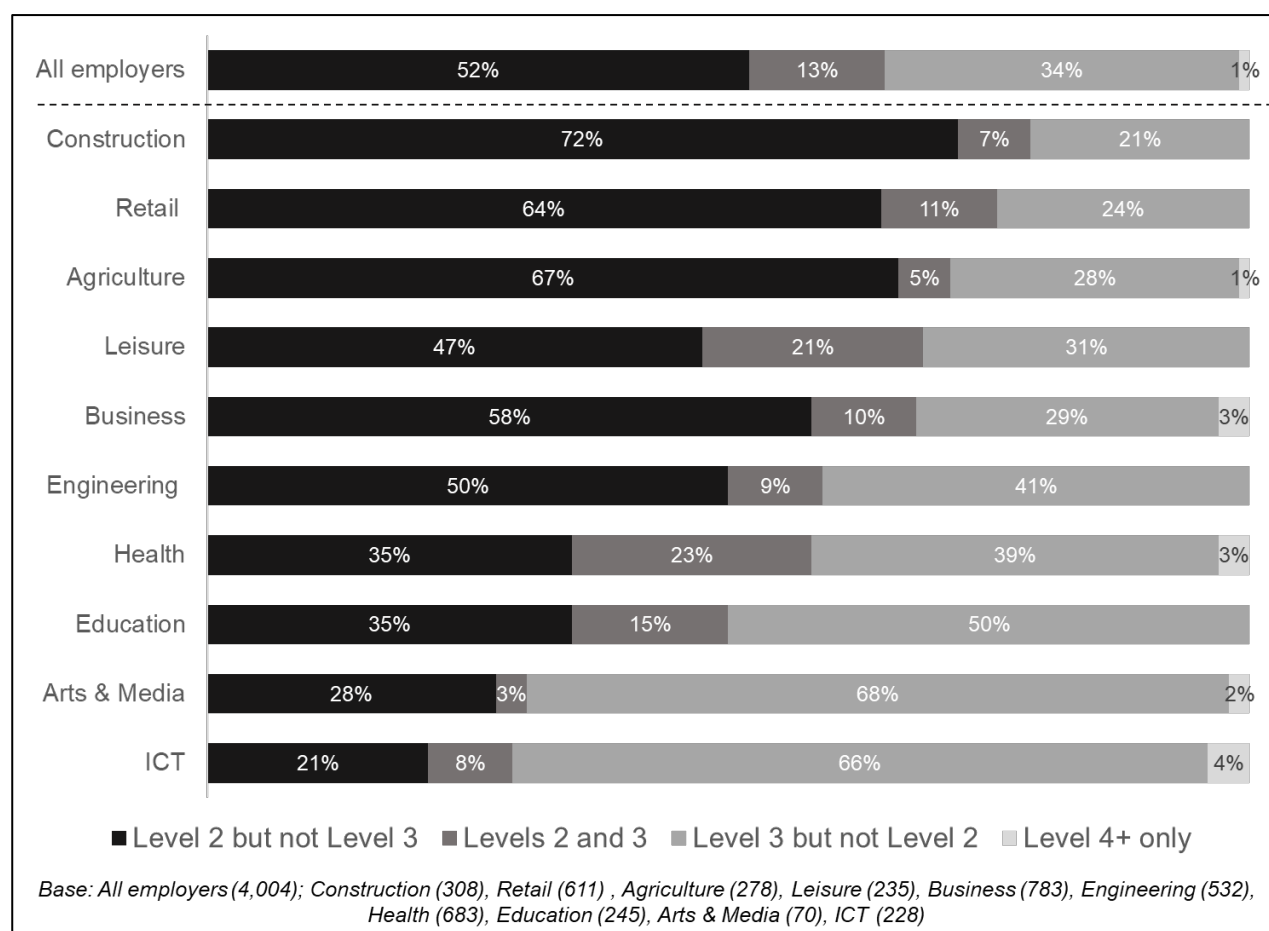
This effect is further amplified for longer higher and degree apprenticeships at level 4 or above; nearly a fifth (18%) of employers interviewed have apprentices at this level, even though they make up only 3% of completers. However, this large difference also reflects a substantial recent increase in numbers of higher and degree apprenticeships. Even excluding the small minority of employers with completers only at level 4 or higher (not included in the base in previous years' research), the proportion of employers with recent level 2 or 3 completers offering higher or degree apprenticeships represents a significant increase on 2015, from 13% to 18% of employers.

Figure 4.4 Levels of apprenticeship



There was a large variation in levels of completions by subject area. Figure 4.5 shows Construction, Retail and Agriculture to be dominated by level 2, whereas ICT and Arts and Media were more likely to be level 3.

Figure 4.5 Levels by main subject area



Age groups

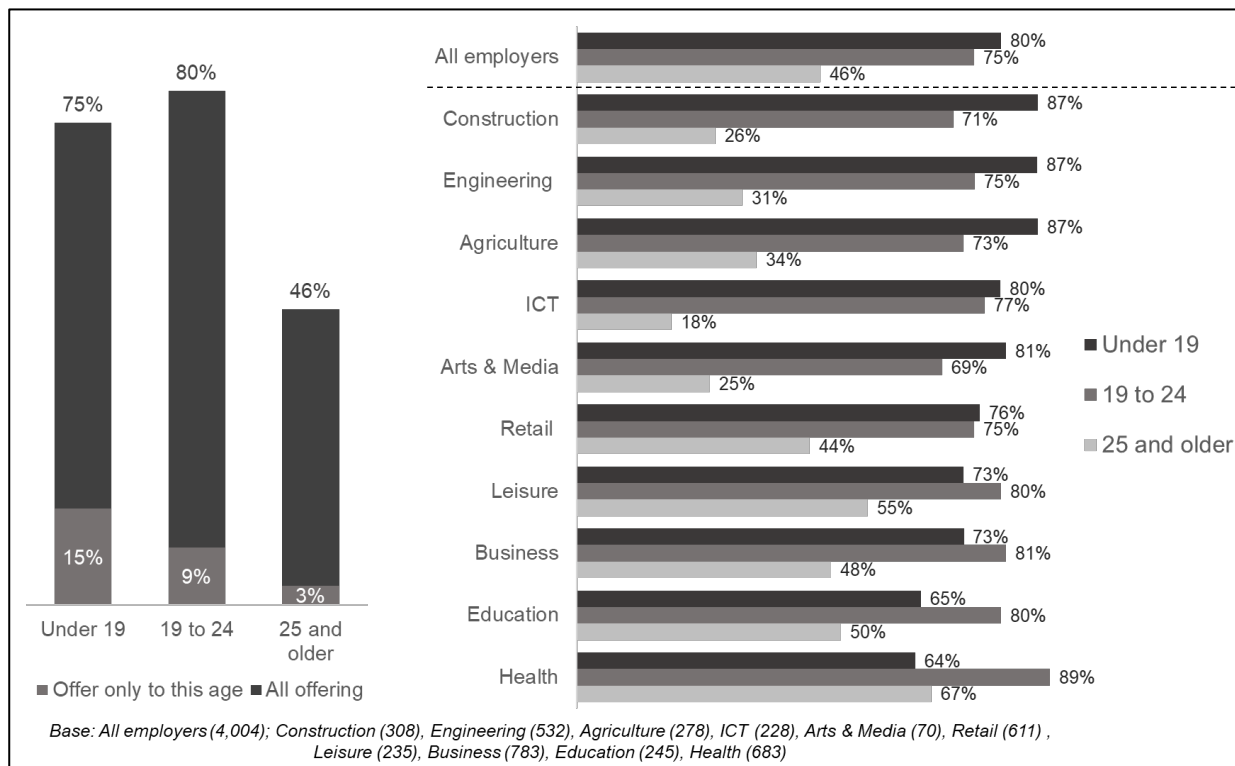
Employers most commonly offered apprenticeships to people aged 19-24 (80%), and/or those aged 16-18 (75%). These figures were very close to those seen in 2015 (80% and 74% respectively). It was less common for employers to offer apprenticeships to people aged 25 or older (46%).

Around one in six employers (15%) offered apprenticeships only to those aged under 19 (the same proportion as in 2015). Employers with apprentices falling only into the under 19 age group were most likely to be offering Arts and Media (30%), Construction (28%), Agriculture (25%), or Engineering (23%) as their main subject area.

Employers offering apprenticeships in Health related subject areas were more likely than average to offer these to older apprentices aged 25 or over (67%, compared to 46% overall). It was relatively rare for employers to only offer apprenticeships to older apprentices (3% only offered them to those aged 25 or over).

Figure 4.6 shows the proportion of employers who were offering or had offered apprenticeships to each age group, and how this differed by subject area.

Figure 4.6 Age groups offered apprenticeships, overall and by subject area

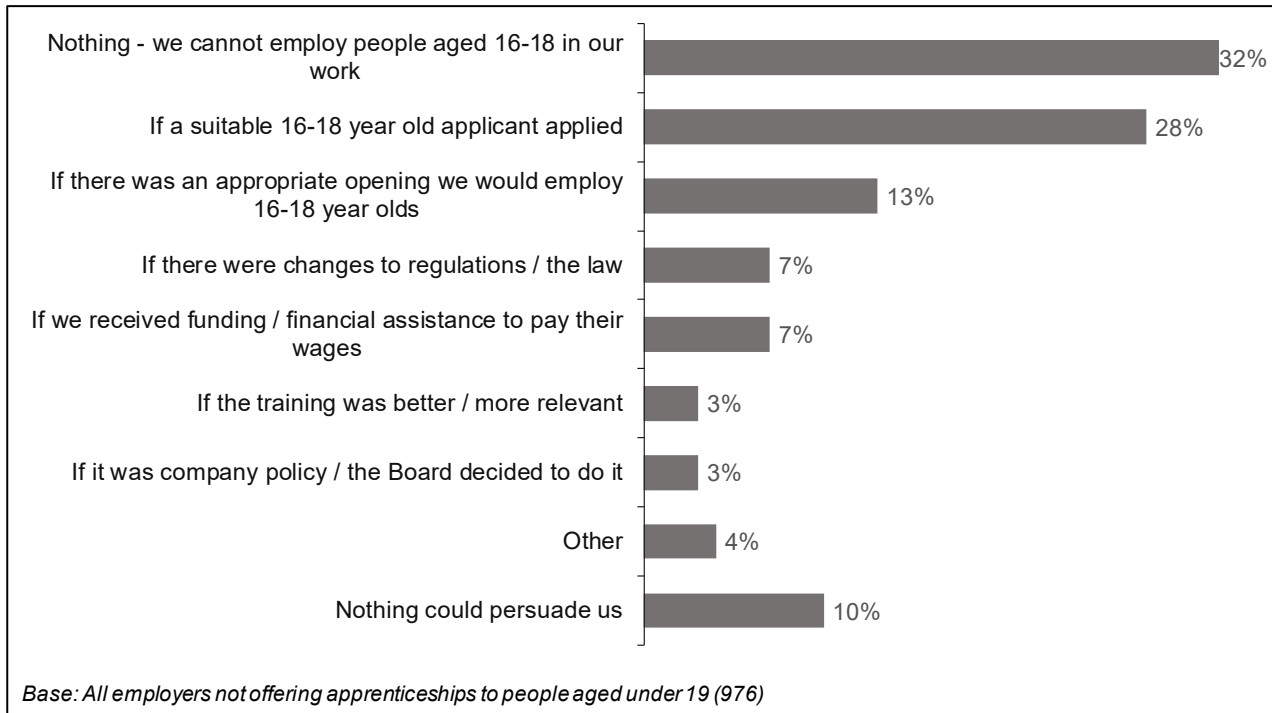


Employers who had only recruited people specifically as apprentices were more likely to have offered apprentices to younger people: 85% had offered apprenticeships to people aged under 19, compared to just 51% of employers who only offered apprenticeships to existing staff. Conversely, those offering apprenticeships only to existing staff were far more likely to have had apprentices aged 25 or over (70%) than those who only recruited specifically for apprenticeship roles (34%).

The main barriers employers identified to offering apprenticeships to people aged under 19 were restrictions on the age of people they could employ: 32% said they could not employ this age group in their line of work. This was particularly common among employers in the Health and Social Work (44%) and Accommodation and Food (43%) sectors.

Employers who do not currently offer apprenticeships to under 19s often said they would be willing to take on apprentices of this age if a suitable applicant came through (28%) or if a suitable opening arose within the company (13%, up from 8% in 2015). A small number (7%) said they would be likely to take one on if more funding became available to pay their wages. Figure 4.7 shows the factors that may make them more likely to take on younger apprentices.

Figure 4.7 What would persuade employers to offer apprenticeships to people aged under 19



Chapter 5 Why and how were apprentices recruited?

This chapter explores why employers offered apprenticeships, the means used to find/recruit apprentices, and why they had recruited apprentices in this way. It also explores awareness and participation in Traineeships.

Key findings

The decision to offer apprenticeships

- The relevance of training to the needs of the business was the most common factor for employers deciding to offer apprenticeships as opposed to another form of training (30%). Other common reasons were that apprenticeships were the required form of training in the industry (19%), the convenience of having the training provider handle recruitment (18%) and their being the best way to aid recruitment and retention (17%).

Who to recruit and how

- **Over two-thirds of employers (69%, up from 65% in 2015) had recruited externally for at least some of their recent apprentices**, while relatively few (32%, down from 38%) had provided apprenticeships to existing staff. A small minority (6%) had provided training to both groups, rising to one-third (35%) of employers with ten or more apprentices. One in ten (10%) had recruited someone specifically for an apprenticeship with their training not starting immediately.
- **A fifth (20%) used the Recruit an Apprentice website**, rising to 24% among those recruiting any of their recent completers. The majority (71%) were satisfied, while just under half (47%) were very satisfied.
- The majority of employers felt that there was sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering apprenticeships (68%, down slightly from 71% in 2015). This was lower among smaller organisations with fewer than 10 employees (62%).

Traineeships – awareness and participation

- **Overall, two-thirds (64%) of employers were aware of Traineeships and just over two-fifths (42%) had some or good knowledge about them**, showing little change from 2015. Larger employers with 100 or more staff were more likely to be aware of Traineeships (76%).
- **A sixth (16%) of all employers participated in Traineeships at the time of the survey**, a decrease from 2015 (19%). However, this did rise to one-fifth (21%) for larger employers, with 100 or more staff on site.
- There was some variation by main subject area, with participation being highest among employers with Health apprenticeships as their main subject area (25%).
- A further 8% intended to offer Traineeships in the future. The greatest appetite for Traineeships was seen in the public sector, where a third (32%) either already

Key findings

offered or planned to offer them compared to a quarter (23%) in the commercial sector.

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

Who to recruit and how

- The proportion of employers recruiting apprentices specifically to start an apprenticeship (as opposed to providing them to existing staff) increased from 64% in 2015, to 69% in 2017. The proportion who provided apprenticeships to existing employees fell from 38% to 32%.
- The reasons for people recruited as apprentices starting the apprenticeship after a delay shifted between 2015 and 2017 from intentional delay (down from 58% to 49%), for example to allow for a probation period, toward administrative delays (up from 33% to 43%).
- The majority of employers (68%) felt that there was sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering apprenticeships, although this has decreased over time (down from 71% in 2015 and 73% in 2014).
- There was an increased demand for information on the level of fees (from 10% in 2015, to 14% in 2017) and in the demand for personal support and advice (from 13% to 20%).

Traineeships – awareness and participation

- There was slightly reduced participation in Traineeships, falling from 19% in 2015, to 16% in 2017.

Reasons for starting to offer apprenticeships

Workplaces that had started offering apprenticeships within the last three years (29%) were asked why they decided to start doing so. The most common reasons were that they believed it a good way to recruit new staff (33%) or to up-skill existing staff (27%). Some employers were motivated by wanting to help young people (21%) or to ensure that young people continued to enter the industry (14%). Smaller proportions of employers gave their reason as having been approached by a training provider (10%), hearing about the availability of grants (10%), or having the ability to shape their own frameworks or standards (6%).

There was some variation by main subject area, with employers offering Agriculture (44%) or ICT (42%) apprenticeships more likely to say they were a good way to recruit new staff, whilst those offering Retail apprenticeships as their main subject area were much less likely to give this response (26%). Ensuring young people continued to enter the industry was seen as a particularly important reason for starting to offer apprenticeships by employers with Construction as their main subject area (24%). Larger employers were more likely than average to have recently started offering apprenticeships as a way to up-skill existing staff (100 or more employees on site; 39%).

Why offer apprenticeships rather than other forms of training?

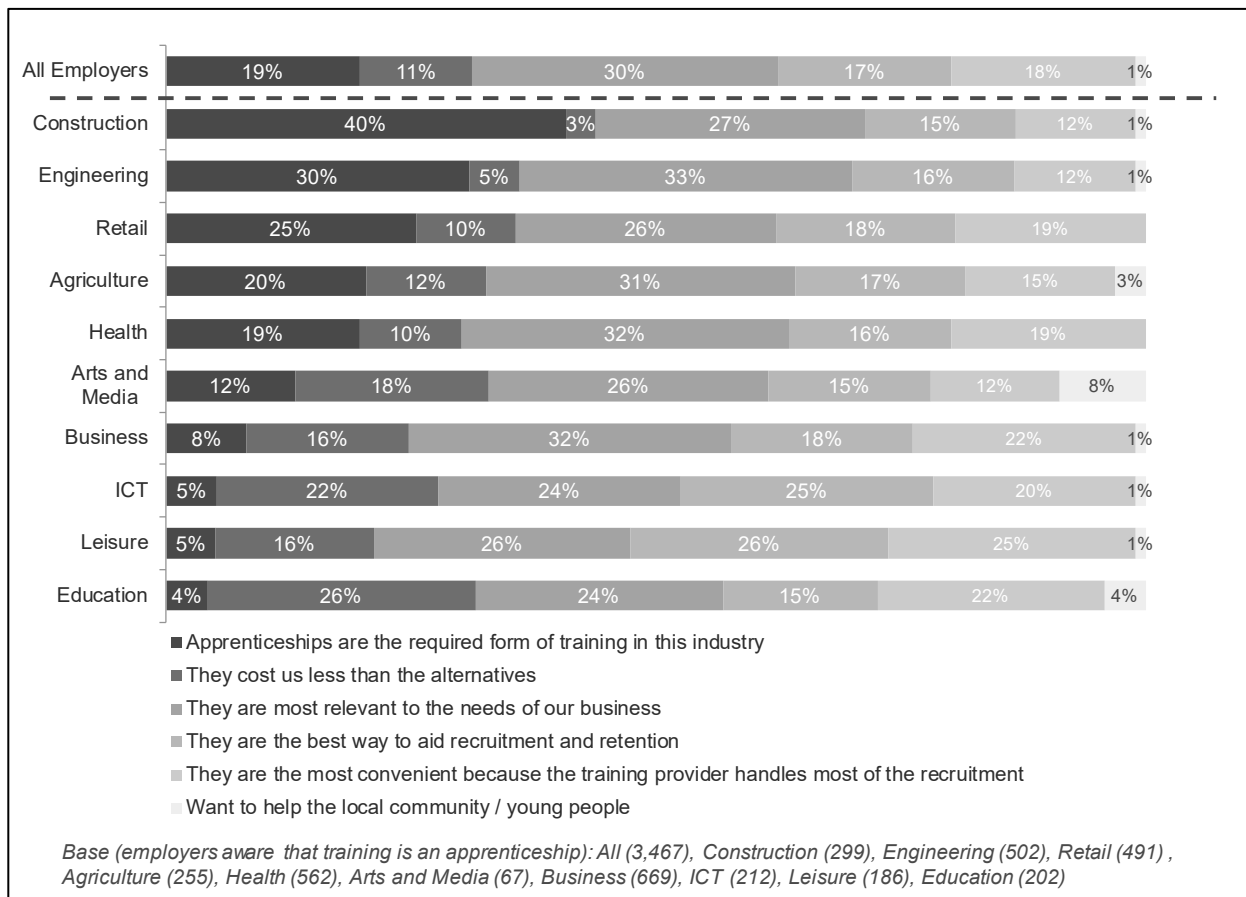
Employers who were aware that the training recently completed by their staff was an apprenticeship were presented with a list of common reasons for offering apprenticeships, and asked which one best described their reason for choosing this form of training or recruitment over others.

The most frequently chosen reason was that apprenticeships were the most relevant form of training to the needs of the business (30%). Other common reasons were that apprenticeships were the required form of training in the industry (19%), the convenience of having the training provider handle recruitment (18%) and that they were the best way to aid recruitment and retention (17%). The financial advantages of apprenticeships were less commonly cited (11%). A small number rejected all these possibilities, and said instead (unprompted) that they offered apprenticeships for altruistic reasons of helping the community or young people (1%). These findings are similar to those found in the 2015 evaluation.

As shown in Figure 5.1, there was substantial variation by main subject area, particularly for reasons associated with cost or it being a required form of training for the industry. For the Construction, Engineering and Retail subject areas, apprenticeships were often chosen over other forms of training because they were seen as a required form of training in the industry (40%, 30% and 25% respectively). In these sectors (specifically Construction and Engineering), cost and convenience were relatively rarely the key reasons for offering apprenticeships.

Cost was a particularly important factor for employers providing Education (26%) and ICT (22%) apprenticeships, and also those in the public sector (14%) and third sector (17%). Convenience, in terms of the training provider handling recruitment of the apprentices, was seen of particular importance among employers providing Leisure (25%) and Business (22%) apprenticeships. Apprenticeships aiding recruitment and retention was most often the reason for having offered apprenticeship training to staff ahead of other forms of training in Leisure (26%) and ICT (25%) subject areas.

Figure 5.1 Single most important reason for offering apprenticeships over other forms of training, by subject area (prompted)

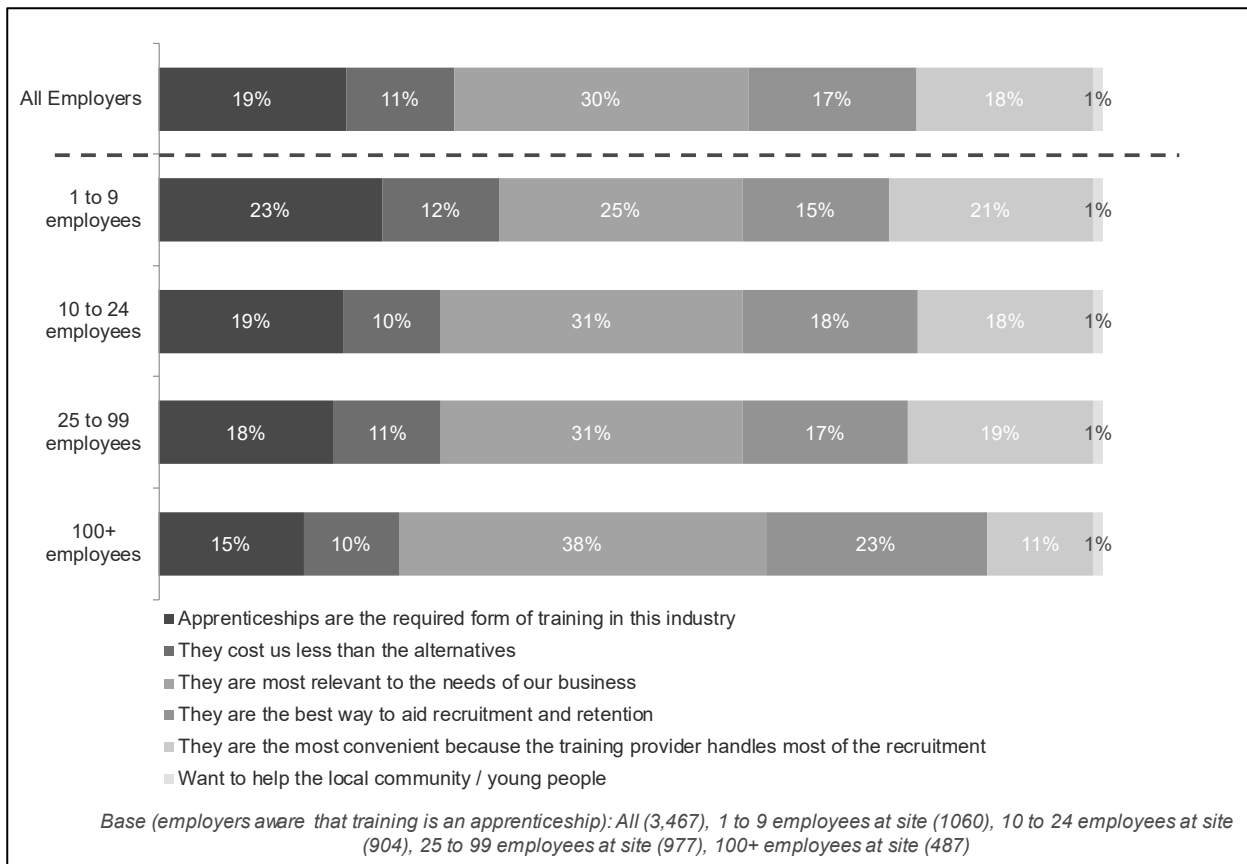


It might be expected that those employers who provided apprenticeships to existing employees would have a different set of reasons to those who recruited new employees as apprentices. However, the differences were relatively small, although still significant. Generally, the relevance of apprenticeships to the needs of the business was an important factor. However, this was particularly true for employers who provided apprenticeships to existing employees only (38%) compared to employers who only recruited specifically for their apprenticeships (27%). Those who specifically recruited only were more likely to believe apprenticeships were the best way to aid recruitment and retention (19%) than employers who only provided apprenticeships to existing employees (12%).

There was also substantial variation by workplace size. In relative terms, large employers with 100 plus staff at the site placed particular emphasis on the needs of the business (38%) and on it aiding recruitment and retention (23%), while small workplaces with fewer than ten employees were more influenced by convenience (21%, twice the proportion of large employers mentioning this factor) and it being the norm in their sector (23%). The importance of cost was similarly judged across these size bands and in line with the average. However, for the very largest employers (with 250 or more employees

on site) cost was rarely the key reason for offering apprenticeships over other forms of training (5%).

Figure 5.2 Single most important reason for offering apprenticeships over other forms of training, by site size (prompted)



Where apprenticeship decisions are made

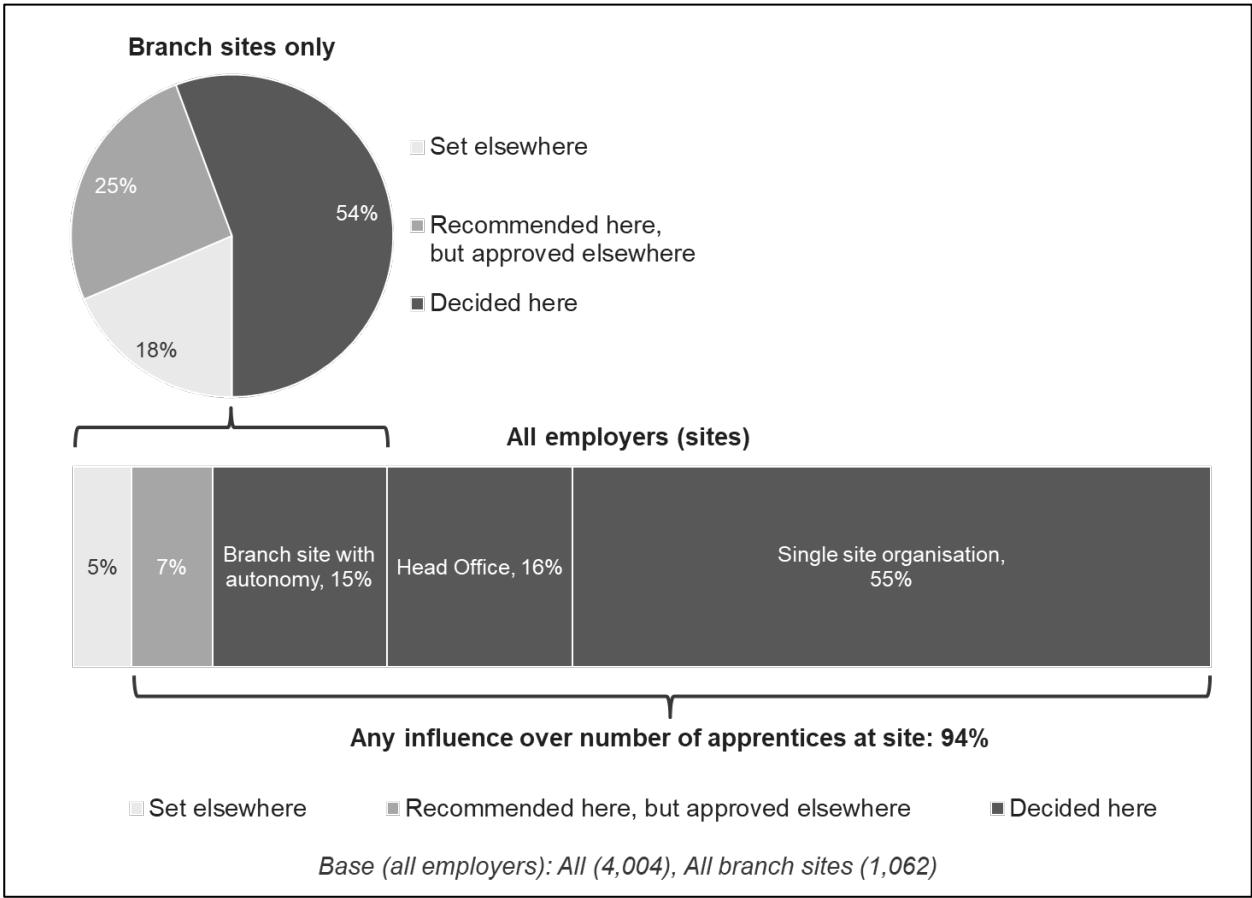
At most workplaces, the decision on the number of apprentices to train was made exclusively by those working at the site itself (87%), and at nearly all (94%) the number was at least suggested by the site, even if Head Office approval was also needed.

Looking only at branch sites (i.e. branches of multi-site organisations that were not head offices), more than half made the decision on apprenticeship recruitment without any head office input (54%), while at around one in six (18%) of branches the decision was made entirely off-site at Head Office. At the remainder (25% of branches) the decision was made locally but approved elsewhere, as Figure 5.3 shows.

In total, just an eighth of all employers (12%) relied to some extent on decisions from head office (5% said head office set the number and 7% said head office approval of their suggestions were needed), exactly in line with findings from the 2015 evaluation. Whilst the majority of employers make the decision at the site itself, there was still a

significant minority where head office involvement or approval is necessary. Therefore, it is important to provide information and support at both the site and head office level within multi-site organisations.

Figure 5.3 Where decisions on numbers of apprentices to take on are made



New recruits and existing employees

There has been much debate around the impact and value of apprenticeships offered to existing employees of an organisation, and concern that they only or mainly serve to accredit existing skills. The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan, published in October 2013, for example made clear that:

“Apprenticeships will remain an all-age programme, with each apprentice undertaking a stretching programme which will lead to genuine skills gain, not to the accreditation of existing skills. Apprenticeships will be available to new and existing employees, but should only be offered to the latter where substantial training is required to achieve competency in their occupation.”

This has still remained a contentious issue in more recent years with Ofsted's “Apprenticeships: developing skills for future prosperity” report (October 2015) finding that there has been:

“Excessive growth in the number of apprentices in service sectors and accrediting the established, skills of people who have been in a job for some time have both become accepted practice, regardless of the value of these apprenticeships to the economy.”

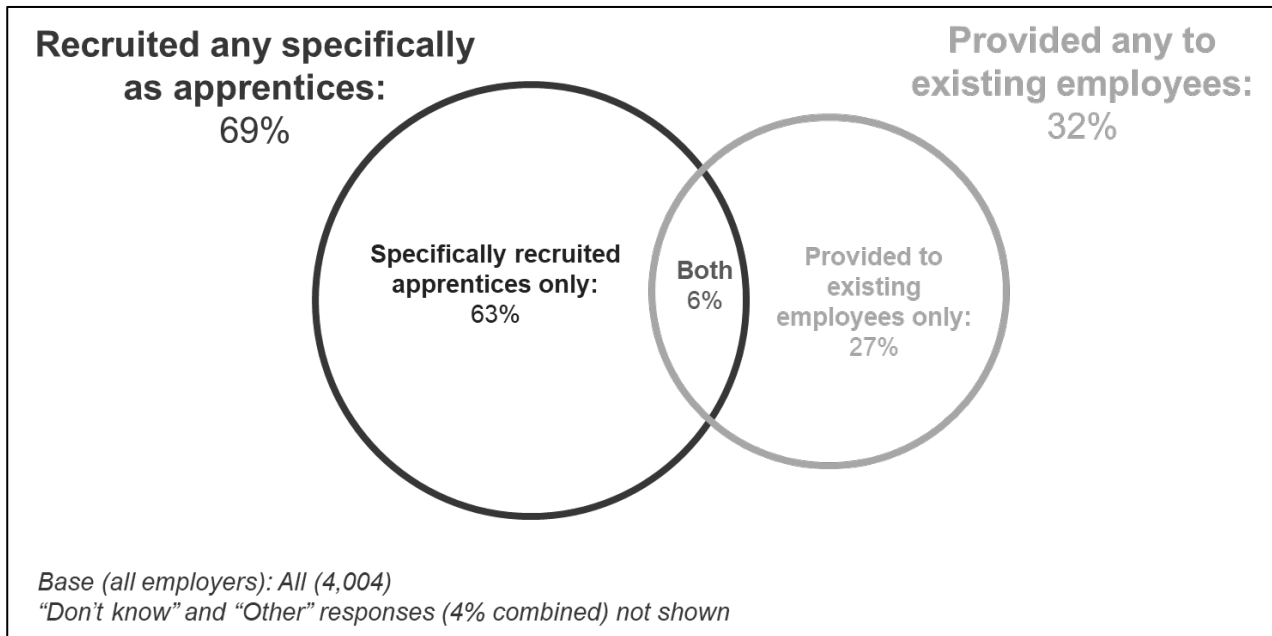
For this reason, whether apprentices were mostly new recruits or existing employees is an area of particular interest for policy-makers. The 2015 survey incorporated a third category, of those who were recruited with the intention that they would start an apprenticeship, but where the training did not start immediately. This was introduced in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of new recruits and to differentiate them from existing employees.

The 2017 evaluation found that three-fifths (60%) of employers provided their apprenticeships to people who were recruited specifically to start an apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away. This has increased since the 2015 evaluation, where 56% of employers did so. A smaller group of employers (10%) had provided apprenticeships to people who were recruited with the intention that they would start an apprenticeship, but the training did not start immediately, in line with 2015 (9%). Around a third (32%) provided apprenticeships to existing employees that were already working for them, excluding any recruited with the intention of starting an apprenticeship. This was a decrease from the 2015 evaluation where two-fifths (38%) of employers provided apprenticeships to existing employees.

There was some overlap between these three groups; as shown in Figure 5.4, nearly two-thirds of employers (69%, up from 64% in 2015) had recruited some apprentices specifically for their apprenticeship, whether it started straight away or not, and around three-fifths (63%) exclusively recruited their apprentices from outside the organisation.

While as previously discussed a third (32%) provided apprenticeships to existing employees not recruited with an apprenticeship in mind, only a quarter (27%) sourced apprentices only in this way. This breakdown, between those sourcing apprentices internally, externally or both, is used for the sub-group analysis shown in subsequent charts.

Figure 5.4 Sources of recent apprentices: all employers

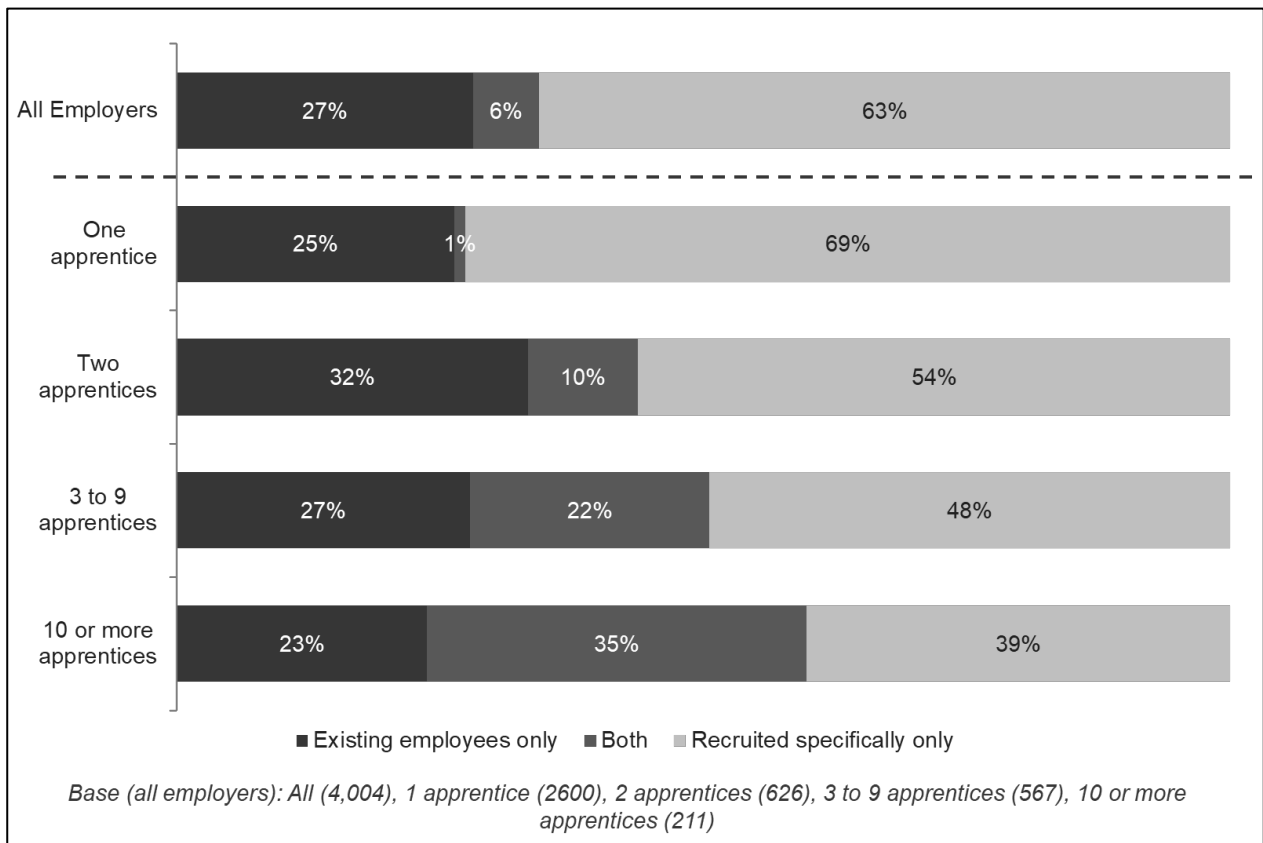


Among the ten per cent of employers where the training of an apprentice did not start immediately when they were recruited, the main reason for this was the need for a probation period (34%, rising to 48% in the non-profit sector), followed by delays on the part of the training provider (31%, rising to 56% in Construction and Engineering), to ensure the employee was suitable before committing (16%), and giving them time to settle in (12%). These reasons were also the most common in the 2015 Apprenticeship Evaluation; however, overall the balance shifted significantly from intentional delays (down from 58% to 49%), such as a probation period, to administrative delays (up from 33% to 43%).

Of those who provided apprenticeships to existing employees, two-fifths (40%) did so to prepare an employee for a new job, though nearly three-fifths (58%) were doing this only to improve skills in an existing job. This latter approach was more common among those offering apprenticeships only to those aged over 19 (63%) or only over 25 (74%).

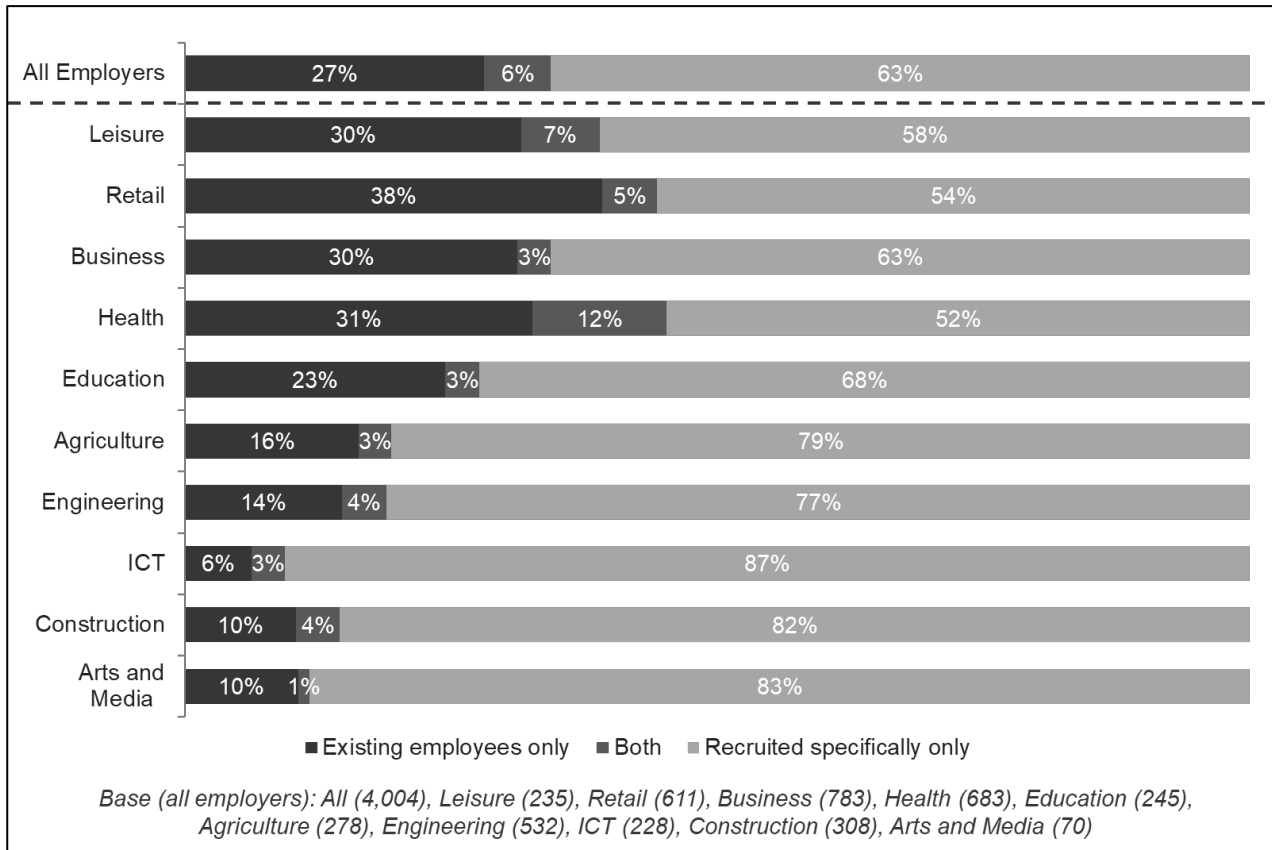
As shown in Figure 5.5, the source of apprentices varied significantly by the number of recent apprentices the employer had. Those with more apprentices were predictably more likely to recruit both externally and internally, and much less likely to rely solely on new recruits.

Figure 5.5 Sources of recruitment for recent apprentice completers, by number of recent apprentices



As shown in Figure 5.6 below, the source of apprentices varied significantly by main subject area; those in ICT (87%), Arts and Media (83%), Agriculture (79%), Construction (82%) and Engineering (77%) were much more likely than average to recruit new employees for apprenticeships. Meanwhile, in Health (52%) and Retail (54%) this was only the case for around half of employees, hence here there was relatively greater emphasis on training existing employees through apprenticeships.

Figure 5.6 Sources of recruitment for recent apprentice completers, by main subject area



Results varied quite dramatically within these broad subject areas by specific framework. For example, nearly three-quarters (72%) of employers who used mainly Hairdressing or Barbering frameworks *only* provided them to new recruits. In comparison, employers offering mainly Other Retail/Commercial frameworks were less likely to solely rely on new recruits (41%) and much more likely to provide apprenticeships for existing employees (48%).

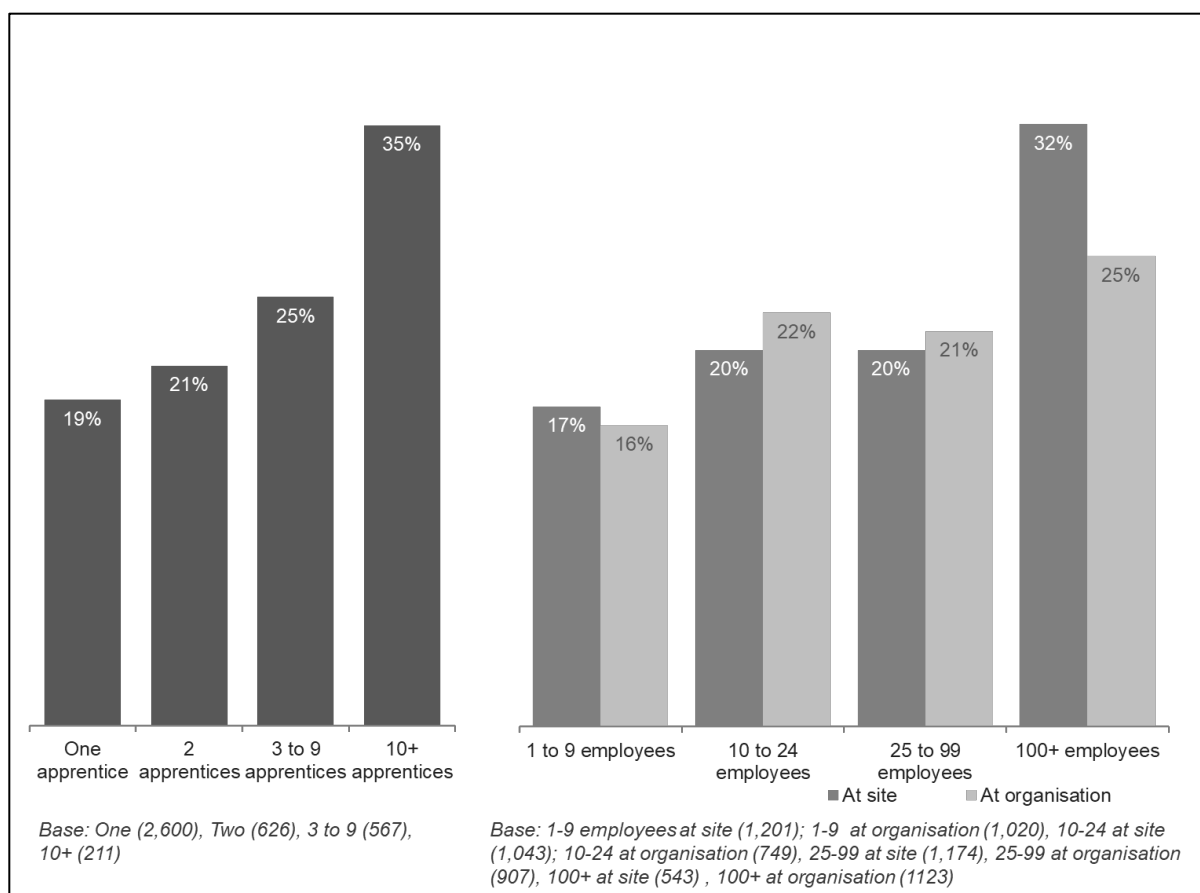
The source of apprentices also varied significantly by apprentice age group. Employers providing apprenticeships for under 25s only were more likely to only specifically recruit apprentices (79%). By contrast, those offering apprenticeships to over 25s only were more likely to provide apprenticeships for existing employees only (83%).

Recruit an Apprentice

The Recruit an Apprentice website, which replaced the previous Apprenticeship Vacancies system, is designed to help employers find suitable individuals for their apprenticeship. A fifth (20%) of all employers have used the Recruit an Apprentice website, rising to a quarter (24%) of those employers who had at least some recent completers that had been recruited specifically as apprentices. A similar proportion of all employers had used the Apprenticeship Vacancies website in 2015 (21%).

The site tended to be used more among those with large numbers of apprentices (35% among those with 10 or more apprentices, compared to 19% among those with just one recent apprentice). Similarly, large sites with 100 or more employees were more likely to use the website (32%), rising to two-fifths (41%) for sites with 250 or more employees. The link to the size of the site was much stronger than that with overall company size, as shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 Use of the Recruit an Apprentice website



The website was more popular for recruiting certain main subject areas than others – in particular Business (26%). It was least used among those mainly recruiting Agriculture and Construction apprentices (both 12%).

Those employers who used the Recruit an Apprentice website were asked to rate it on a scale of zero to ten, where ten was the most positive and zero the most negative. Most users (71%) rated Recruit an Apprentice positively (six or more out of ten), although only just under a half of users (47%) rated it eight out of ten or better. Overall, around one-eighth (12%) rated it poor (a score of four or less out of ten). Satisfaction has increased from 2015, where three-fifths (60%) of employers were satisfied with Apprenticeship Vacancies (six or more out of ten) and just under two-fifths (37%) were very satisfied (a rating of eight or more).

There was little variation across different types of apprenticeships or employers, although those offering Business apprenticeships as their main subject area were particularly satisfied (54% rating it eight or more out of ten).

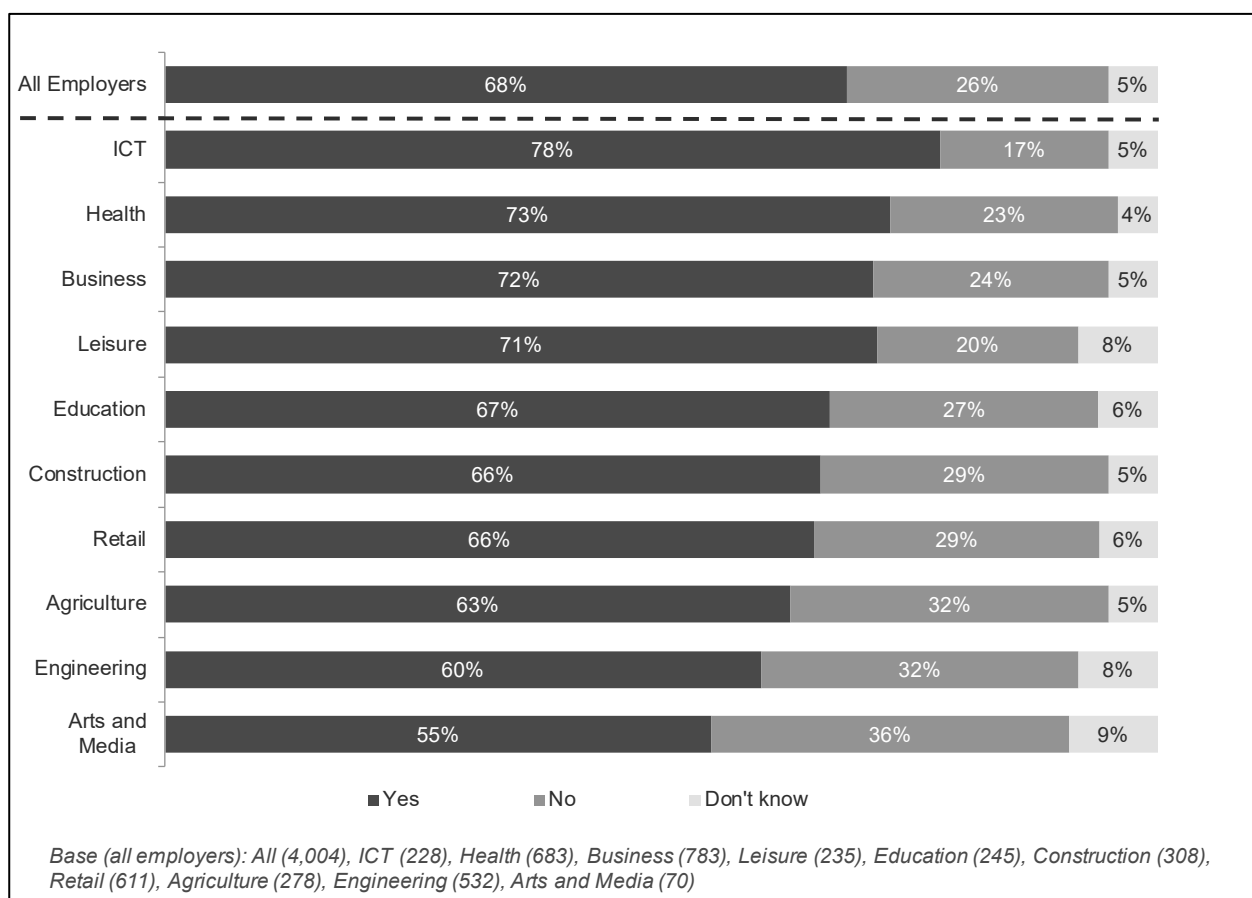
The most common reasons for dissatisfaction with the Recruit an Apprentice service were that the candidates were not appropriate or were of poor quality (46%) or that they were unable to find an apprentice through the website (33%). Due to the small number of employers using the Recruit an Apprentice website being dissatisfied with the service, subgroup analysis is not feasible.

Support for applications

The majority of employers (68%) felt that there was sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering apprenticeships, although this has decreased over time (down from 71% in 2015 and 73% in 2014). Employers with more than 50 employees had a more favourable impression of the information, support and guidance available, with seven in ten (71%) finding current provision sufficient compared to around two-thirds of those with fewer than ten employees (62%).

Views on the sufficiency of information, guidance and support varied by main subject area as well: those offering ICT (78%), Health (73%) and Business (72%) were most positive, whilst those offering Arts and Media (55%) and Engineering (60%) were the least satisfied, as Figure 5.8 shows. Public sector employers were more likely to feel they had sufficient support and guidance (75%) than the commercial sector (67%).

Figure 5.8 Whether employers felt that there was sufficient information, support and guidance available, by subject area



Those employers who felt the information, support or guidance available was insufficient cited a range of reasons. Most commonly, these employers reported that it was not made clear who to approach or how to get further information (29%). Around one-fifth also stated there was a lack of information on how to find funding (22%) or how to recruit apprentices (20%).

Perhaps providing an indication as to why employers' perceptions of the information, support and guidance available has dropped over time, the proportion of those dissatisfied highlighting a lack of information concerning the level of fees has increased (from 10% in 2015 to 14% in 2017), as has the proportion citing the need for personal support and advice (from 13% to 21%). Therefore, it is important to address these issues in order to ensure that there is sufficient information in place to support and encourage employers that are looking to offer apprenticeships in the future.

Traineeships – awareness, participation and future plans

Traineeships were introduced in 2013 to provide work experience to people not in work who need additional skills to get a job or an apprenticeship. The programme specifically targets 16 to 24 year olds and the work experience sits alongside support with basic skills such as maths and English to improve their suitability for the workplace. The Traineeships: First Year Evaluation published in 2015³ showed that two-thirds (67%) of those who had completed or left a Traineeship had ‘positive’ outcomes such as being in employment (28%), on an apprenticeship (22%), or in education or training (17%).

In the 2017 evaluation, two-thirds of employers (64%) had heard of Traineeships and just over two-fifths had some knowledge (28%) or a good knowledge (14%) of what Traineeships involve. This replicates the findings from the 2015 evaluation, where two-thirds (64%) had heard of Traineeships and 43% had some or good knowledge of what they involved. Table 5.1 illustrates awareness and knowledge by the number of employees at the site and main subject area.

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412623/BIS-15-195-Traineeships-first-year-process-evaluation-executive-summary.pdf

Table 5.1 Awareness and knowledge of Traineeships, by site size and main subject area (row percentages)

	Base		Not heard of	Aware of but no knowledge	Some Knowledge	Good Knowledge	AT LEAST SOME KNOWLEDGE	AWARE
All Employers	4,004	%	35	22	28	14	42	64
1-9 staff	1,201	%	40	23	26	11	37	60
10-24 staff	1,043	%	36	24	26	13	40	64
25-99 staff	1,174	%	33	21	31	14	45	66
100+ staff	543	%	24	21	33	22	55	76
Agriculture	278	%	42	25	23	10	33	58
Arts and Media	70	%	37	28	6	26	32	60
Business	783	%	33	25	23	19	42	67
Construction	308	%	43	22	23	11	34	56
Education	245	%	41	26	26	6	32	58
Engineering	532	%	39	22	28	10	38	61
Health	683	%	28	19	38	14	52	71
ICT	228	%	42	23	25	10	35	58
Leisure	235	%	33	21	32	14	46	67
Retail	611	%	37	23	28	11	39	62

Awareness of Traineeships was highest among:

- Larger employers: 76% of employers with 100 or more staff on site were aware of Traineeships, rising to 86% of employers with 250 or more staff on site.
- Employers offering a Health (71%), Business (67%) or Leisure (67%) apprenticeship. Awareness was particularly low among employers offering a Construction apprenticeship (56%).
- Employers operating in the public sector or third sector (72% aware compared with 62% in the commercial sector).
- Those with higher volumes of apprentices: 85% of employers with ten or more apprentices were aware of Traineeships.

A sixth (16%) of all employers were participating or had participated in Traineeships at the time of the survey, either as a provider or by offering work experience placements as part of the programme. This was slightly down from 2015 (19%). Participation was most common among employers offering Health (25%) apprenticeships as their main subject area, and less common in Construction (10%) and Engineering (12%) and ICT (10%).

Increased awareness and knowledge of Traineeships for larger employers translated to slightly higher levels of participation; over a fifth (21%) of employers with 100 or more staff on site participated in Traineeships, rising to 27% for employers with 250 or more staff on site. Furthermore, linked to size, employers with more apprentices completing within the survey sampling window (6 or more apprentices – 29%) or with a more diverse offering (i.e. offering both level 2 and 3 – 25%) were more likely to participate in in Traineeships.

Traineeships as a route into apprenticeships

Traineeships are intended to provide a platform for individuals to learn the basic skills they need to start an apprenticeship. In this context, a small portion (6%) of employers had recent apprentice completers who had undertaken a Traineeship with them before starting the apprenticeship. This rose to eight per cent among employers offering a Health apprenticeship as their main subject area.

Future Traineeship offering

While a sixth of employers participated in Traineeships, a further eight per cent intended to do so in future. This figure should be treated with some caution as no particular timeframe was given and future intentions may be a poor predictor of future growth. This pattern was found in the Employer Perspectives Study 2014⁴, where appetite for offering apprenticeships in the future remained constant across 2012 and 2014, yet overall growth only increased slightly.

When combining those who offered Traineeships with those who intended to do so in future, the greatest appetite for Traineeships was seen among employers in the Public Admin and Defence sector (40%), followed by Education (38%) and Health and Social Work (33%), all sectors dominated by the public sector. By contrast there was far less interest in Traineeships in the Information and Communications sector (15%), Professional, Scientific and Technology (15%), Construction (17%) and the Transport and Storage sector (17%).

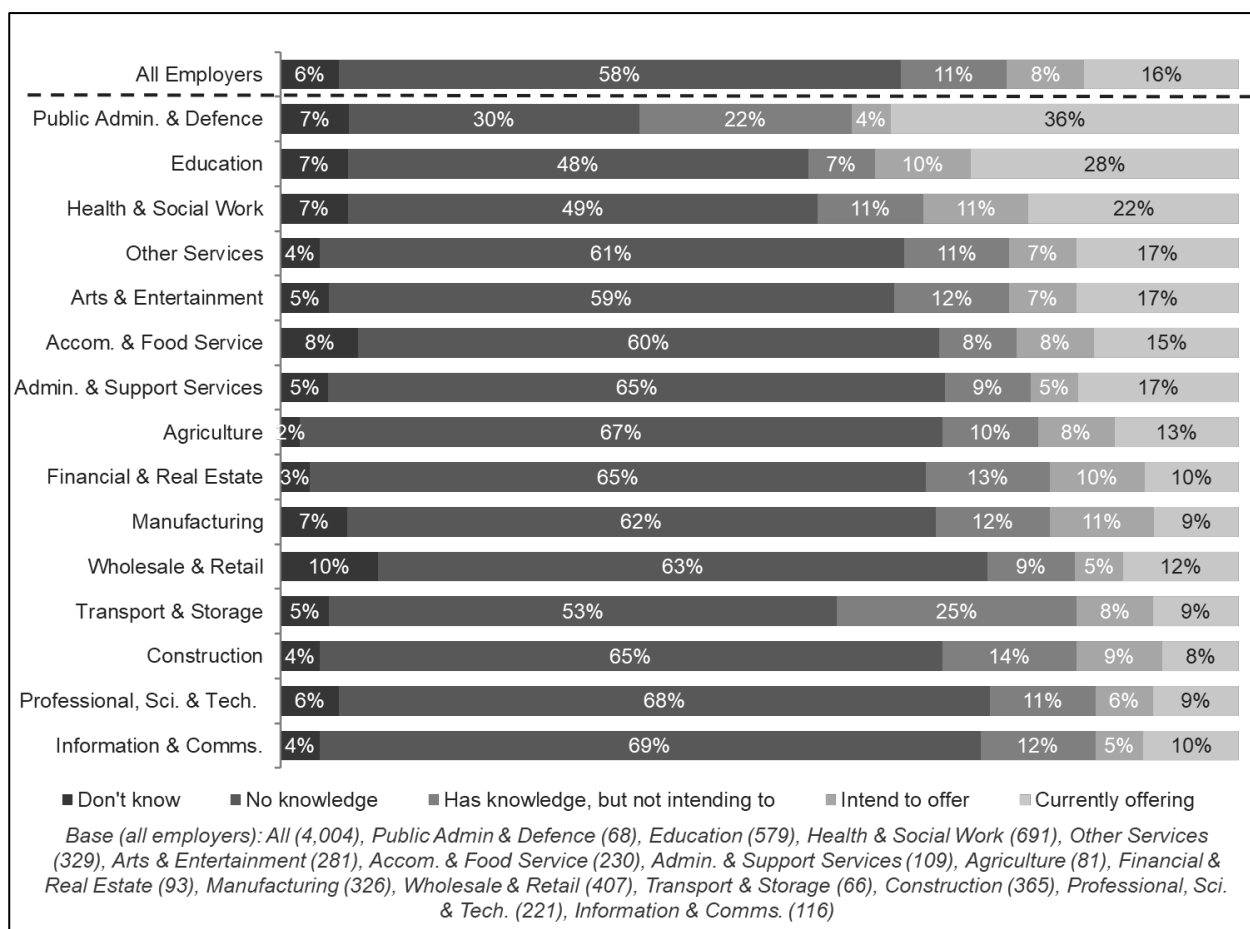
Overall, the public sector was much more positive about Traineeships; nearly a third (29%) either already offered or planned to offer them, compared to a quarter (23%) in the commercial sector.

One in nine (11%) of all employers had at least some knowledge of Traineeships, but did not intend to offer Traineeships in the future; this was most widespread in the Transport and Storage sector (25%), indicating that the low level of interest in this sector is not simply caused by a low level of awareness.

4

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373769/14.11.11._EPS_2014_-_Main_Report_full_V2.pdf

Figure 5.9 Future Traineeship offering, by sector



Chapter 6 Keeping apprentices: retention and progression

This chapter explores issues of retention, and employer attitudes toward offering progression toward higher level qualifications, with a particular focus on higher apprenticeships.

Key findings

Retention

- **Around two-thirds of employers (65%) reported that all their recent apprentices were still with the organisation** at the time of the survey, unchanged from 2015. Retention was highest in Health, Engineering and Construction, and lowest in Agriculture and Arts and Media.
- Where apprentices had left the organisation, seven in ten (71%) employers considered that it had been the apprentice's decision to leave, primarily to move into another sector, or improve their promotion or pay prospects. Of the minority of employers who said they asked the apprentice to leave, close to half (46%) felt that the apprentice was not performing at the level required.

Offering progression

- **Just over half (52%) of employers offered any kind of qualification at level 4 or above**, with about one-third specifically offering higher apprenticeships (32%, up from 26% in 2015) or degree apprenticeships (12%, consistent with 2015). However, **less than half (16% of all employers) had actually had an apprentice progress to these levels.**
- There was considerable variation by subject area, with for example a majority of employers providing mainly Health apprenticeships offering higher level qualifications (68%), compared with less than a third in Agriculture (31%).
- Smaller businesses and those with smaller apprenticeship schemes were much less likely to offer higher level qualifications.
- **Employers that did not offer higher level qualifications most often said there was a lack of demand from employees (30%),** that they were not required to do the job (17%), or that they were not aware of any (16%).
- Knowledge of higher apprenticeships is relatively low: only three in 10 (31%) considered that they had at least some knowledge of higher apprenticeships, although 54% of all employers thought they might be relevant to their organisation.

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

Offering progression

- There was a slight increase in the proportion of employers with ‘any knowledge’ of higher apprenticeships, from 59% in 2015 to 61% in 2017, although the proportion saying they knew a fair amount or a great deal about them remains unchanged at 31%.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of employers offering higher apprenticeships, from 26% in 2015 to 32% in 2017. The proportion offering a degree apprenticeship had not increased (12%) but the combined proportion offering either higher or degree level increased to 33% from 29% in 2015.
- In total, 16% of all employers had an apprentice progress to higher or degree level. This represented a small but significant increase from 2015 (13%).
- Meanwhile, the proportion offering non-apprenticeship forms of higher or degree level training fell from 46% in 2015 to 41% in 2017.

Why offer progression?

- Among employers offering higher level qualifications, a larger proportion than in 2015 said that they were a requirement for promotion (27%, up from 18% in 2015), or part of their staff retention strategy (17%, up from 11%).
- Among those not offering higher levels, a lack of interest among staff was more often mentioned than in 2015 (30%, up from 24% in 2015), but the proportion saying higher level qualifications are not required to do the job fell from 23% to 17% in 2017.
- Among those not offering higher apprenticeships, the proportion feeling that they were relevant to the organisation fell, from 51% in 2015 to 47% in 2017.

Retaining apprentices

Around two-thirds of employers (65%) reported that all their recent apprentices were still with the company at the time of the survey⁵, in line with the 2015 evaluation, while three-quarters (76%) have kept at least some of the apprentices. Apprentices in the accompanying Learner survey were also asked whether they were still with the same company at the time of the survey: six in ten (60%) apprentices who completed their

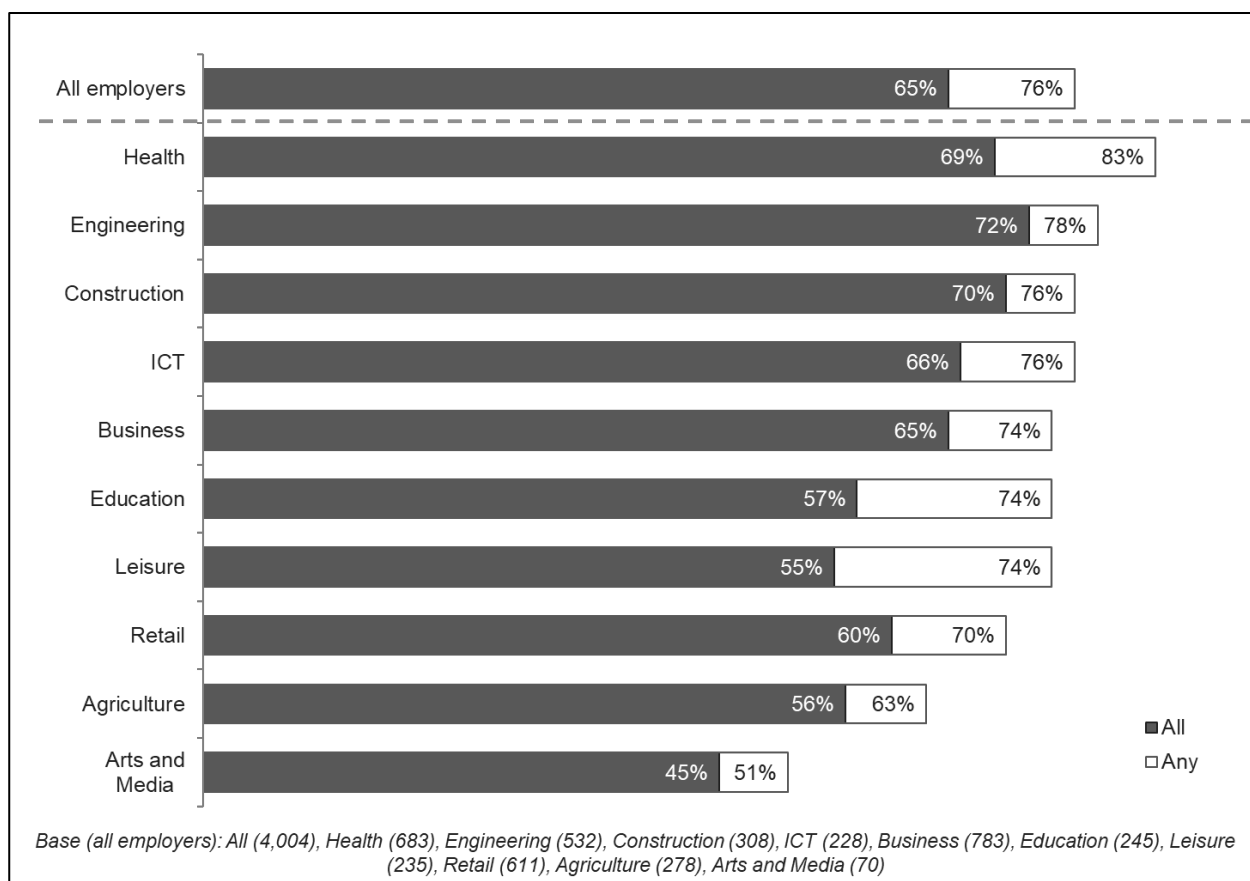
⁵ Employers were asked this question between 12 and 22 months after their apprentices completed training.

apprenticeship were with the same employer, rising to 68% if based on those in employment at the time of the survey.

The percentage of employers retaining at least some apprentices was higher among those who only provided apprenticeships to existing members of staff (84%), and those who only offered apprenticeship to those aged 25 or over were particularly likely to have retained all of their apprentices (87%). Those whose main motivation for offering apprenticeships was to reduce costs were less likely to have retained any of their apprentices (65%).

As shown in Figure 6.1, there was variation by the subject area of apprenticeship; those employers mainly providing Arts and Media (51%), Agriculture (63%) and Retail (70%) apprenticeships were significantly less likely to have kept any of their apprentice completers than average, while those in Health (83%) were more likely to do so.

Figure 6.1 Whether recent apprentices were still working for the organisation at the time of the survey, by subject area



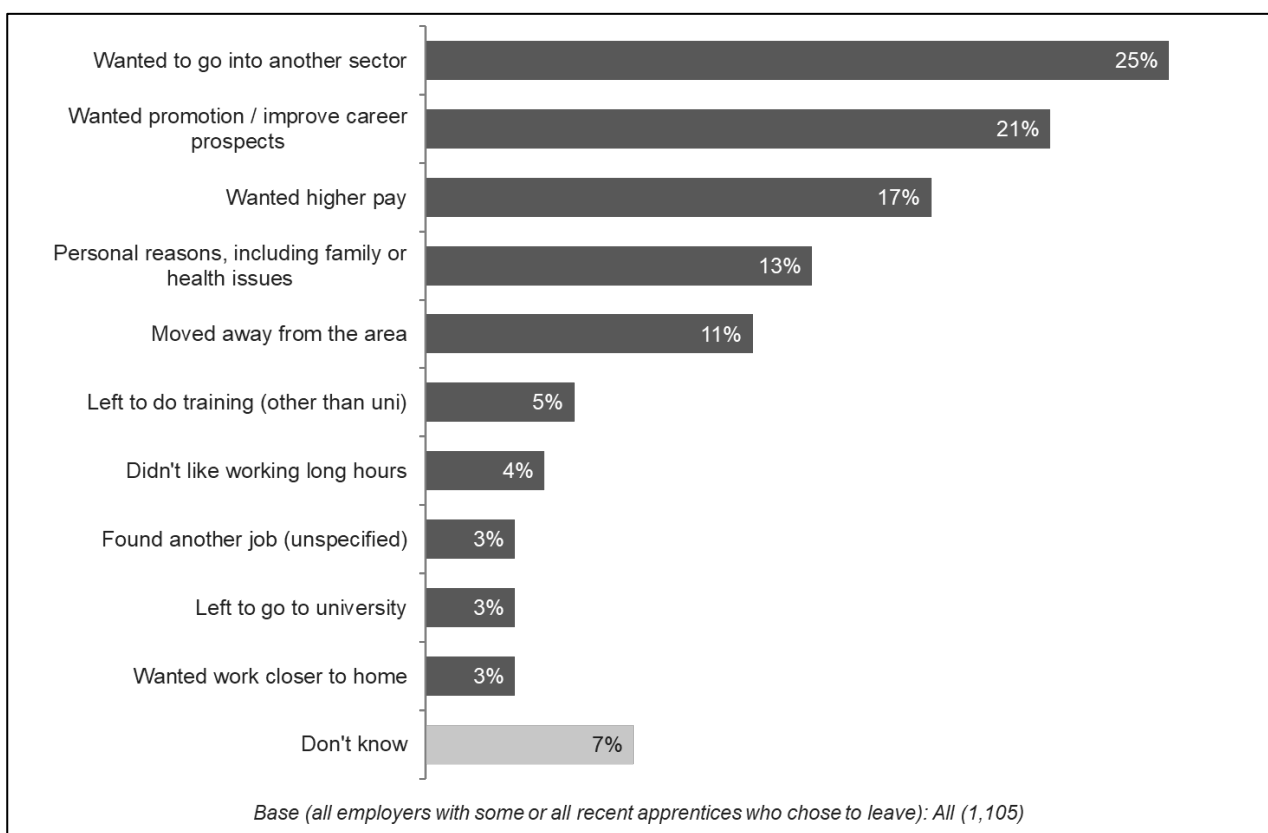
Reasons for recent apprentices leaving their employer

The majority (71%) of employers who had had recent apprentices leave their organisation considered that it had been the apprentice's decision to go. This was much

higher among employers who had only taken existing staff on to an apprenticeship (83%).

The most common reasons for apprentices deciding to leave, according to employers, were their desire to move into another sector (25%), to improve their promotion or career prospects (21%) or because they were seeking a higher salary (17%), as shown in Figure 6.2. By subject area, a third (33%) of employers mainly providing Engineering apprenticeships reported that their apprentices had left to move sector; this was far less common in Education (12%). A desire for higher pay was most common in Construction (31%), while 10% of employers providing Agriculture apprenticeships reported that their apprentices left due to the long working hours (higher than the 4% average).

Figure 6.2 Reasons why recent apprentices decided to leave their organisation, by subject area



Employers who had asked an apprentice to leave broadly fell into two camps; those who felt their apprentice was not suitable for the company and those who did not plan to take on apprentices as permanent staff due to workload or cost. Close to half (46%) reported that their apprentice was not performing to the standard they expected. Meanwhile, around a quarter of these employers (26%) did not have enough work on (rising to 36% of employers with 100+ staff at their site), and a further 14% thought they could not afford to offer the apprentice an ongoing role. Only a minority (3%) reported that the apprenticeship had only been offered as a temporary position.

Fixed term contracts

Over seven in ten (73%) employers who recruited apprentices specifically for the role used fixed term contracts for the duration of the apprenticeship for at least some of their apprentices, in line with 2015 (71%). Two-thirds of employers (67%) only used this type of contract.

Use of these contracts was much more widespread among employers providing some subject areas than others; in particular they were the only form of contract used at nearly all employers where Arts and Media (88%), or Education (87%) was the main subject area.

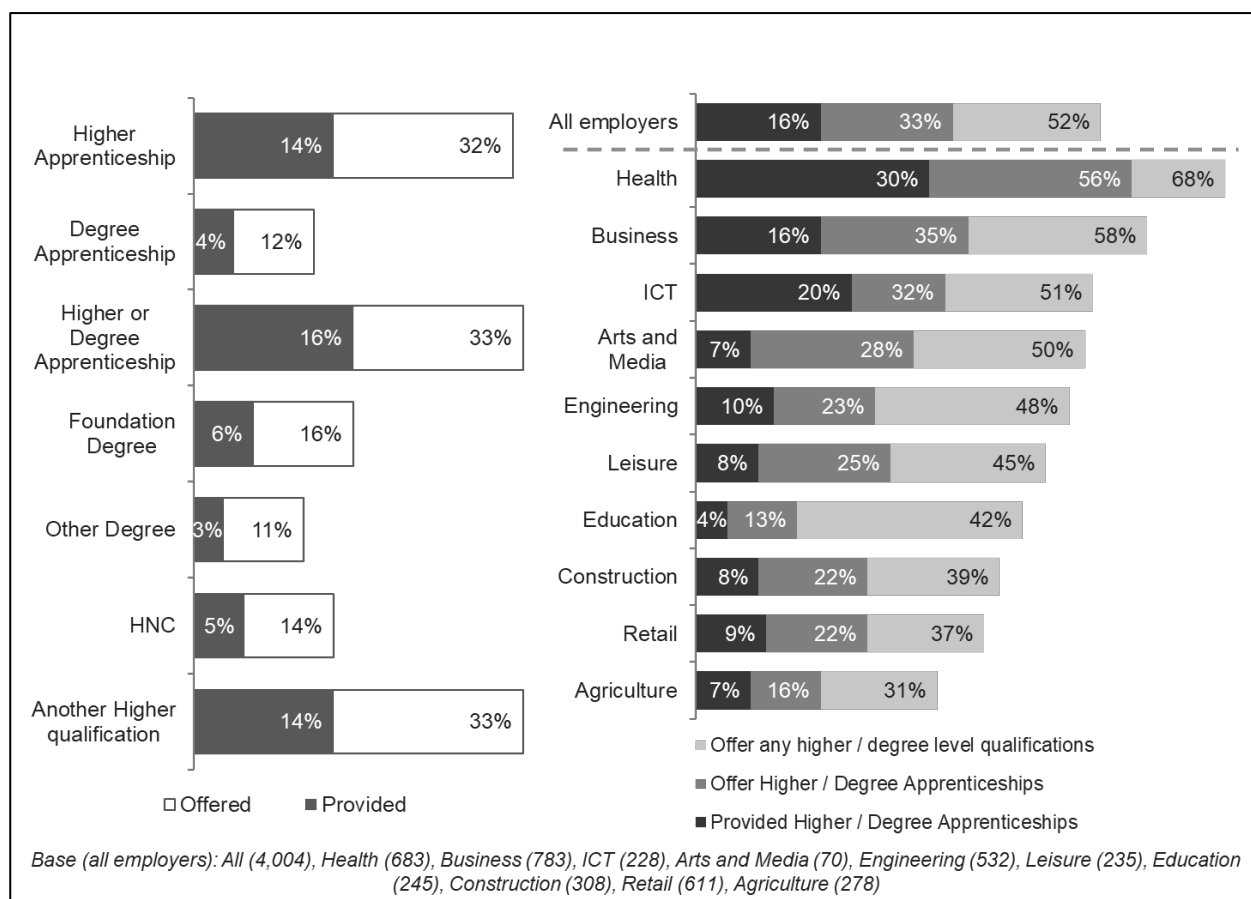
Offering progression

Just over half (52%) of apprentice employers offered any kind of qualification at level 4 or above. This showed no change from 2015, but there has been a small increase in the proportion of employers offering higher apprenticeships (from 26% to 32%). The proportion offering a degree apprenticeship has remained constant (12%). Combined, a third (33%) of employers offered either higher or degree apprenticeships, up from 29% in 2015.

Of this group who offered higher and degree apprenticeships, close to half (47%) reported that in practice one or more apprentices had progressed onto a higher or degree level apprenticeship. This is equivalent to 16% of all employers, a small but significant increase from 2015 (13%).

As shown in Figure 6.3, there was substantial variation by subject area. Employers whose main subject area was in Health were much more likely to offer and provide progression than others.

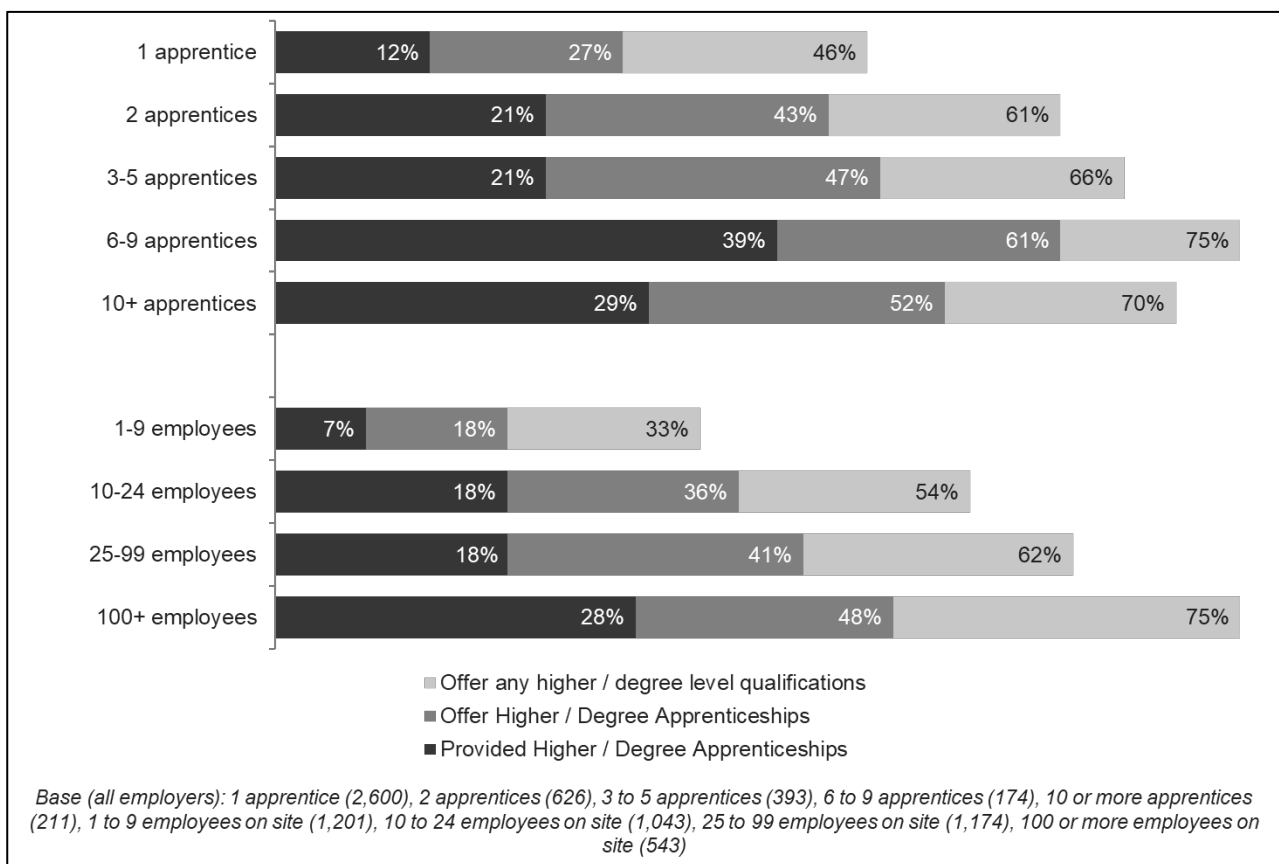
Figure 6.3 Offering and providing higher level qualifications, overall and by main subject area



As expected, there is a clear link between providing apprenticeships at level 3 and offering them at level 4 or higher; those that had any recent completers at level 3 were more likely to offer higher or degree level apprenticeships (38%) than those with any completers at level 2 (32%).

The provision of higher level qualifications was also associated with the number of apprentices, and the number of employers at their site. As shown in Figure 6.4, larger employers and those with more apprentices tended to be more likely both to offer and to have provided higher level qualifications, including higher or degree apprenticeships at level 4 and above.

Figure 6.4 Offering and providing higher level qualifications, by number of apprentices and size of site workforce



Why offer progression?

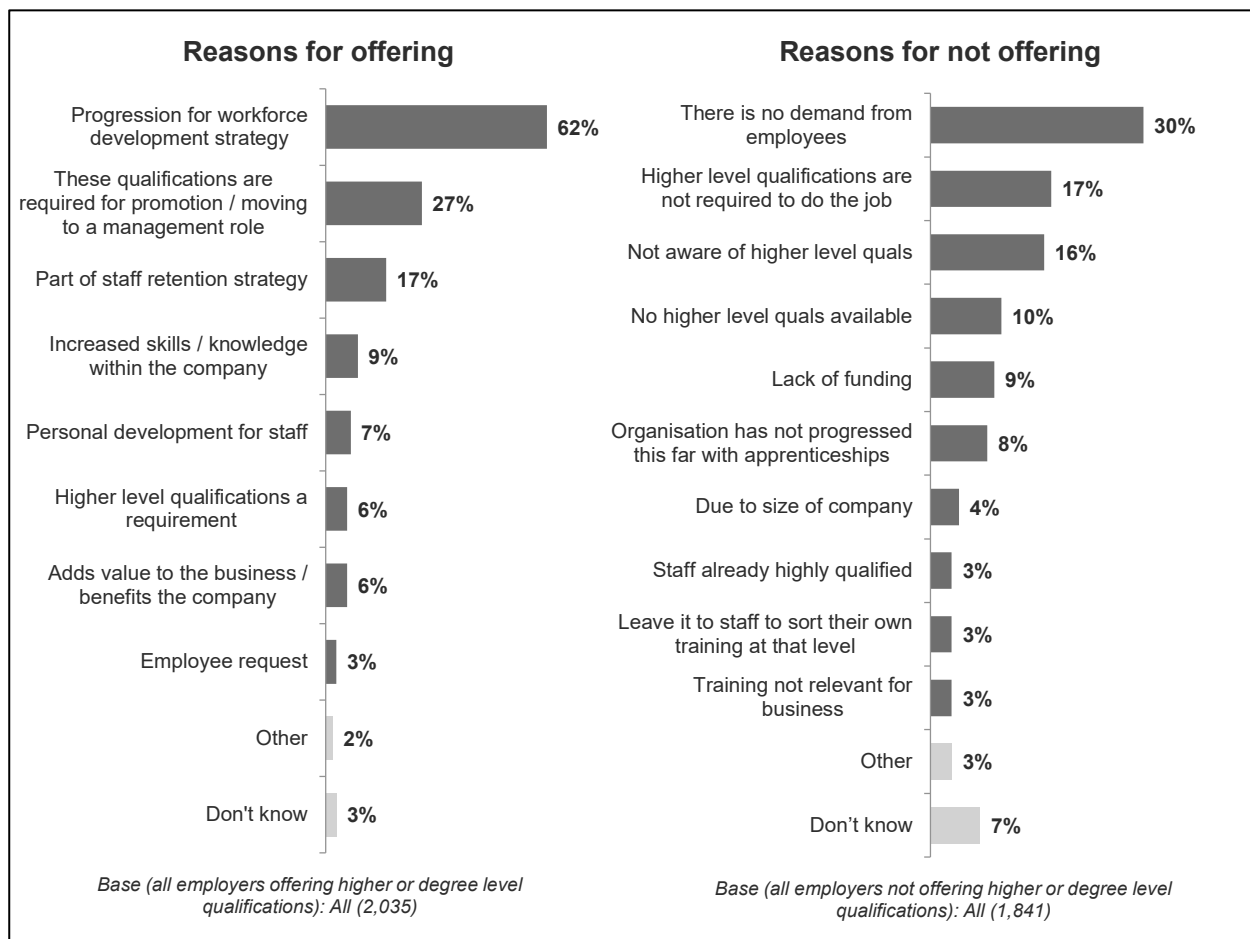
Most employers who offer higher or degree level qualifications do so as part of their workforce development strategy (62%). Around a quarter (27%) mentioned the need for higher qualifications for promotion or for management roles, up from 18% in 2015. Giving this reason was particularly common among employers whose main subject area was Health (36%), sites with 100+ staff (33%) and those with larger apprenticeship programmes (39%).

This shift is potentially one effect of the apprenticeship Levy, introduced in April 2017, which might encourage eligible (typically larger) employers to switch existing training to higher apprenticeship qualifications (see Chapter 9 for more information on employer responses to the Levy). For around one in six (17%) employers, offering higher or degree level qualifications formed part of employers' retention strategy, an increase from 11% in 2015.

For those not offering progression to higher or degree levels, employers were more likely to report that there was no interest or demand from their staff (30%, increasing from 24% in 2015). Employers whose main subject area was Business were most likely to cite this reason (37%). The next most common reason for not offering higher or degree level qualifications was that they were not a requirement of any job role (17%, rising to 28% among those whose main subject area was Construction). Meanwhile, one in six (16%) said they were not aware of such qualifications, with a further 10% stating that they did not think there were any higher level qualifications available in their sector (highest among those offering Construction apprenticeships – 15%). This showed no change from the 2015 evaluation. A lack of funding (9%) was a particular issue for those operating in the public (15%) and third (19%) sectors.

Figure 6.5 shows the most common reasons for offering and not offering higher level qualifications.

Figure 6.5 Reasons for offering and not offering higher level qualifications



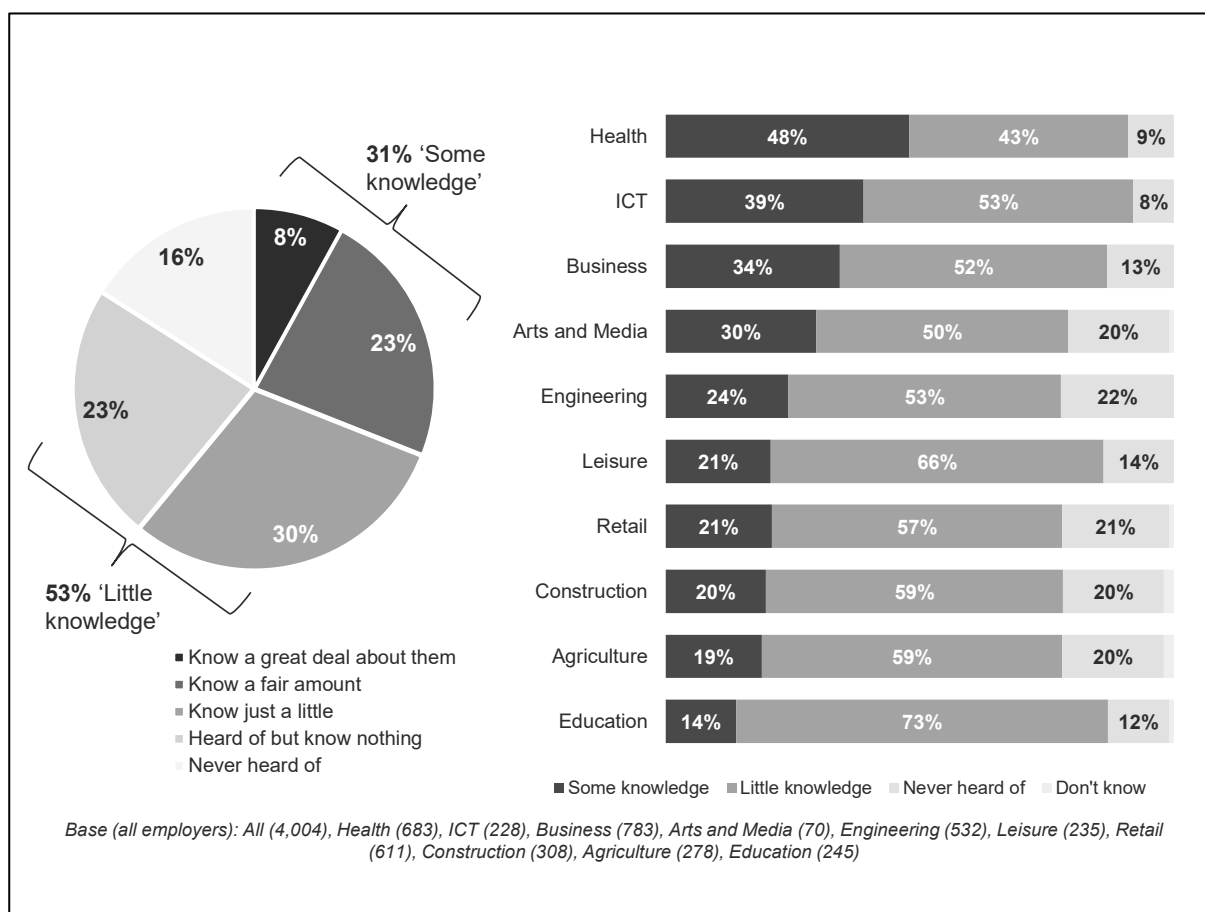
Awareness and relevance of higher apprenticeships

About three in ten employers (31%) considered that they knew at least a fair amount about higher apprenticeships ('some knowledge'), consistent with 2015. A further half of employers knew a little about them (30%) or had heard of them without knowing what they entailed (23%). Only a minority (16%) of employers had never heard of higher apprenticeships.

Among those who offered higher apprenticeships, 57% reported at least 'some knowledge' of them; it might be expected that this audience would have a greater knowledge of higher apprenticeships, but it is possible that a few of those responding to the survey were not responsible for this type of training within the organisation.

There was considerable variation by subject area: half (48%) of employers mainly providing Health apprenticeships had some knowledge of higher apprenticeships, compared to just 14% of employers providing Education apprenticeships, and 19% providing Agriculture apprenticeships, as Figure 6.6 illustrates.

Figure 6.6 Knowledge of higher apprenticeships, by main subject area



Larger employers were much more familiar than average with higher apprenticeships: 50% of employers with 100+ staff had some knowledge of higher apprenticeships,

compared with just 22% of employers with 1-9 staff. Knowledge was also closely associated with the length of time employers had offered apprenticeships: two-fifths (39%) of employers offering apprenticeships for 10+ years had some knowledge of higher apprenticeships compared with one-fifth (22%) of employers offering apprenticeships for fewer than 3 years.

Despite a third of employers offering higher apprenticeships, and a similar proportion professing to having some knowledge of them, there appears to be appetite among those less engaged to become more involved in developing skills at this level. Over half (54%) of all employers considered that higher apprenticeships were, or might be, either very (26%) or quite (29%) relevant to their organisation. Only one in six (16%) considered that they were not at all relevant. Among those with at least a little knowledge of higher apprenticeships, the proportion citing that they were relevant rose to 64%. And despite a lack of knowledge of higher apprenticeships, still 39% of employers with no knowledge of them thought that they might be relevant to their organisation.

Similarly, among employers who did not currently offer higher or degree apprenticeships, close to half (47%) still felt that these might be relevant to their organisation. Those providing Health (58%), Business (55%) and ICT (55%) apprenticeships, but not offering higher or degree level, were particularly likely to feel that higher apprenticeships might be relevant to their organisation. This proportion fell to under two fifths (38%) among those providing Engineering, and was lowest (27%) in Construction.

Chapter 7 Delivery, assessment and influence of apprenticeship training

In this section, we examine the delivery and assessment of the apprenticeship training as well as employers' level of influence on that training. This section also assesses the prevalence of Maths and English GCSE among apprentices, and the importance of this to employers.

Key findings

Delivery and Assessment

- **Nearly all employers (94%) used an external training provider** to deliver at least some of their apprenticeship training, consistent with 2015, while **75% provided at least some formal training themselves**.
- While there was little variation by subject area in terms of those using an external training provider, the profile of those providing formal training internally varied considerably: eight in ten employers with an Agriculture (81%) or Retail (83%) apprenticeship as the main subject area provided formal internal training sessions compared with 68% of employers delivering ICT apprenticeships.
- **Very few (1%) employers carried out the apprenticeship assessment** themselves, rising to three per cent of sites with 250 or more employees.

Influence

- **Nearly two-thirds (65%) of employers felt able to influence** the structure, content, delivery or duration of their apprenticeship training, either before or after it commenced. However, not all of the employers who felt they had no influence felt it would be useful; overall, 18% wanted more influence than they currently had.

Apprenticeship Standards

- **Nearly two-fifths (37%) of employers were aware of the new apprenticeship standards.** A fifth (20%) overall had at least some knowledge about them. Larger employers (with 100 or more staff on site) were more likely to be aware (68%) or have knowledge (51%) of the new standards.
- Employers offering apprenticeships in Construction as their main subject area were less likely to be aware (29%) or have any knowledge (15%) of the new apprenticeship standards.
- **Nearly a tenth (8%) of all employers were involved with these new standards** in some way, up from 6% in 2015.
- **Two-fifths (40%) of employers reported that all their apprentices already had both a Maths and English GCSE at A*-C.** The majority (67%) considered it important for apprentices to have or to achieve these qualifications.

Key findings

- Such qualifications were deemed more important by employers offering “newer” subject areas such as Education (where 94% of employers regarded these skills as important) than more “traditional” subject areas like Construction (65%).

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

Delivery and assessment

- There was a slight but significant increase in the proportion of employers providing formal training sessions as part of the apprenticeship (from 73% in 2015 to 75%).
- A third (32%) of employers who had not been able to influence apprenticeship training reported that they would like more influence in this area. This is an increase from 2015, where 30% of those with limited influence wanted more.

Apprenticeship Standards

- Nearly two-fifths (37%) of employers were aware of apprenticeship Standards, with one-fifth (20%) having either some or good knowledge about them. This was a considerable increase from 2015, when only 24% were aware of the Trailblazer initiatives.
- A small proportion (8%) of all employers were involved in some way in Trailblazers, representing an increase from 6% in 2015.
- Over three-fifths (62%) of those involved in the Trailblazers considered these to be an improvement over the previous frameworks, an increase from 54% in 2015.
- The proportion of employers with at least some knowledge of the new apprenticeship standards who intend to offer them within the next five years has increased from 67% to 80%.

Previous qualifications

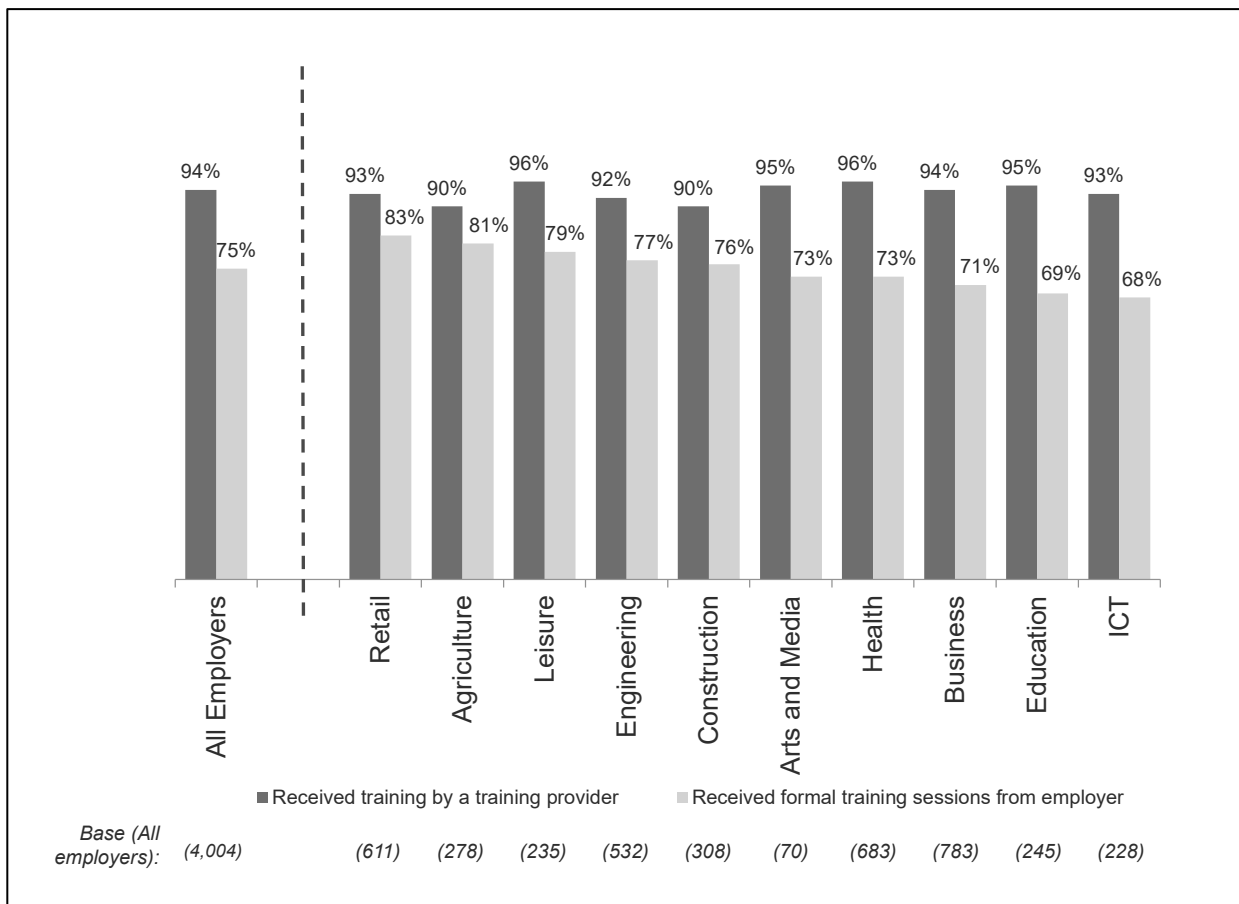
- Two-fifths (40%) reported that all of their apprentices had both a Maths and English GCSE at A*-C, which represents a small increase from 2015 (34%), although there was a slight reduction in the proportion citing the importance of these qualifications among apprentices (from 70% to 67%).

Delivery and assessment of apprenticeship training

Nearly all employers used an external provider to deliver at least some of the apprenticeship training (94%, consistent with 2015). Again, in line with 2015, three-quarters (75%) of all employers provided formal training sessions themselves as part of the apprenticeship.

There was relatively little variation in the use of training providers by main subject area, with at least nine in ten employers across all subject areas using an external training provider. There was more variation in the provision of formal internal training sessions as part of the apprenticeship by subject area. Over eight in ten employers with an Agriculture (81%) or Retail (83%) apprenticeship provided formal training sessions, falling to less than seven in ten with an apprenticeship in the Education (69%) or ICT subject areas (68%), as Figure 7.1 shows.

Figure 7.1 Whether apprentices received training from a training provider and from their employer, by main subject area



Employers who offered apprenticeships to existing employees were less likely to provide formal internal training sessions (66% among those who only took on existing employees, compared with 80% of those who only recruited external applicants). There were no differences between these groups of employers regarding the use of external training providers.

Over seven in ten (72%) employers offered their apprentices training at both an external training provider and at their own organisation. A fifth (22%) only used an external training provider for training. Only a small minority (4%) offered solely internal training.

Assessment of apprenticeship training

While the delivery of apprenticeship training tended to be conducted by both an external training provider and the employer themselves, the assessment of apprentices was generally left to the external training provider. Consistent with 2015, 97% used an external training provider to assess their apprentices whilst only one per cent carried out the assessment themselves. Large sites were slightly more likely to have carried out the assessment themselves; among sites with 250 or more employees, three per cent had done so.

Employer influence on apprenticeship training

The recent apprenticeship reforms have emphasised the importance of employer choice over what training their apprentices receive and the design and delivery of the apprenticeship, by enabling groups of employers to collaborate to design their own standards and assessments. This study provides an opportunity to assess employers' engagement with this aspect of the new apprenticeship standards.

In total, 48% of employers were able to influence the structure, content, delivery or duration of their apprentices' training before the training started, while 57% were able to exercise influence during the training. Those employers that lacked influence over the apprentices' training at either time were asked if they wanted it. Combining these findings:

- **65% of employers said they were able to exercise influence on their apprentices' training at some point, the same percentage as in 2015.** Two-fifths (41%) were able to influence the training both before and after it commenced.
- **Half of employers (55%) said they lacked influence either before or after the training commenced (or both); indeed, a third (33%) had no influence at all:**
 - Within the group of employers lacking influence, 66% (or 36% of all employers) did not want further influence, and **32% (equivalent to 18% of all employers) wanted more influence than they already had**, about the same as in 2015 (30%).

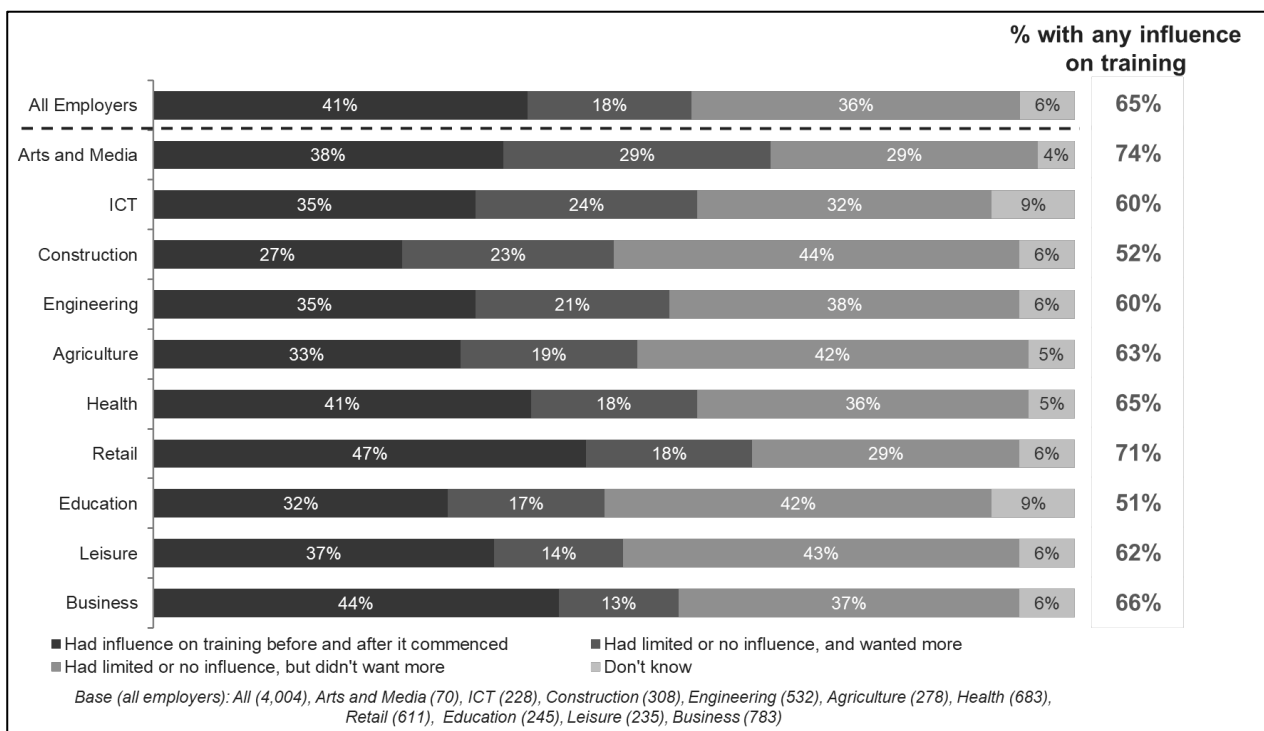
The proportion of employers who were able to influence training before the start of the apprenticeship was particularly high amongst those offering Business and Retail apprenticeships (both 53%). Employers who offered apprenticeships on more "traditional" subject areas were able to influence training to a lesser extent. Indeed, amongst employers offering apprenticeships in Construction, only a third (31%) were able to influence training before it had started, although this rose to half (48%) able to influence training once it had commenced.

Whilst these findings represent a similar pattern as found in 2015, those using Construction apprenticeships have shown an increase in whether they were able to influence the training either before (31% vs 28% in 2015) or after it had started (48% vs 38% in 2015).

The ability to influence the content, delivery or duration of the apprenticeship training before or after it had started was more common among large employers; three-fifths of employers with 100 or more staff on site had been able to influence the training before (60%) or after (64%) it started, with this rising to seven in ten among those with 250 or more staff on site (72% and 70% respectively).

Whilst nearly a fifth (18%) of all employers wanted more influence over apprenticeship training, this varied considerably by subject area, as Figure 7.2 shows. Around a quarter of employers whose main apprenticeship subject area was Arts and Media (29%), ICT (24%) or Construction (23%) wanted more influence over the apprenticeship training, compared to just an eighth of those whose main subject area was in Business (13%) or Leisure (14%).

Figure 7.2 Employer desire for more influence on apprenticeship training, by main subject area



Employers who recruited external candidates specifically for an apprenticeship were more likely to want more influence over training (19%) than those who only took on existing employees (15%).

Awareness of the new apprenticeship standards

All employers were asked about their awareness of the new apprenticeship standards, where a group of employers known as Trailblazers collaborate to design an apprenticeship. Nearly two-fifths (37%) of employers were aware of the new programme, with one-fifth (20%) having either some or good knowledge about them. This was a considerable increase from the last Apprenticeship Evaluation in 2015, where only one quarter (24%) were aware of the new Trailblazer initiatives, with one in eight (12%) having some or good knowledge. Table 7.1 illustrates awareness and knowledge of the new apprenticeship standards by site size and subject area.

Table 7.1 Awareness and knowledge of new apprenticeship standards by site size and main subject area (row percentages)

	Base		Not heard of	Aware of but no knowledge	Some Knowledge	Good Knowledge	AT LEAST SOME KNOWLEDGE	AWARE
All Employers	4,004	%	63	17	11	9	20	37
1-9 staff	1,201	%	73	16	7	4	11	27
10-24 staff	1,043	%	66	16	11	6	18	34
25-99 staff	1,174	%	62	18	11	8	19	38
100+ staff	543	%	32	17	20	30	51	68
Agriculture	278	%	68	18	9	5	13	32
Arts and Media	70	%	41	29	8	20	29	57
Business	783	%	56	17	12	15	26	44
Construction	308	%	70	14	8	7	15	29
Education	245	%	69	19	10	2	12	31
Engineering	532	%	67	13	11	10	20	33
Health	683	%	63	20	12	5	17	36
ICT	228	%	57	17	16	10	26	43
Leisure	235	%	60	16	16	7	23	39
Retail	611	%	66	17	9	7	16	33

Awareness and knowledge was higher among larger sites, with over two-thirds (68%) of employers amongst sites with 100 or more employees being aware of the new standards and half (51%) having some or good knowledge, increasing further amongst sites with 250 or more employees (83% and 72% respectively). Similarly, linked to site size, employers with a higher volume of apprentices were more likely to have higher levels of awareness and knowledge.

There was some variation by main subject area, with employers offering apprenticeships in “newer” areas more likely to be aware or have some knowledge about the new

standards. For example, employers offering apprenticeships in Arts and Media as their main subject area were more likely to be aware (57%) and to have some or good knowledge (29%) of the standards, as were those providing Business (44% and 26% respectively) or ICT (43% and 26% respectively) apprenticeships. By comparison, employers offering Construction were less likely to be aware (29%) or have any knowledge (15%) about the new apprenticeship standards.

Involvement and views on the new apprenticeship standards

While close to two-fifths were aware of the new apprenticeship standards, only a small proportion (8%) of all employers were involved in some way, although this represented an increase from 6% in 2015. There have been delays getting the standards published and approved for delivery, so involvement can be expected to increase as more standards are published. Involvement was linked to overall engagement with apprenticeships, with employers with a larger number of apprentices (6 or more completing in the survey window) much more likely to have been involved (22%).

The most common forms of involvement included being consulted about the standards (4% of all employers), or developing the standards themselves (4%). A smaller proportion had apprentices undertake an apprenticeship on the new standard (2%) or had contributed to developing assessments (2%). A similar pattern was found in 2015.

Employers whose main subject area was Arts and Media (15%) or Business (11%) were more likely to have been involved with the new apprenticeship standards than employers delivering other apprenticeships. Additionally, those offering Business apprenticeships were slightly more likely than average to have had apprentices on the new standards (3%). Similarly, employers with 100 or more staff on site were more likely than average to have had apprentices undertake an apprenticeship on the new standards (5%).

Those employers involved with the new standards were asked whether they considered these new standards to be an improvement over the previous frameworks. Over three-fifths (62%) considered them to be an improvement, with one-fifth (22%) being unsure or feeling that it was too early to say, leaving a sixth (15%) who did not consider them to be an improvement.

Future offering of new apprenticeship standards

The new apprenticeship standards are intended to account for an increasing proportion of apprenticeships over the next few years as more standards become ready for delivery. It is anticipated there will be a large number of starters on the new standards in 2017/2018⁶, with funding for all older apprenticeship frameworks (SASE) expected to be withdrawn by 2020.

The majority (80%) of employers with at least some knowledge of the new apprenticeship standards intended to offer them within the next five years. However, taking into account the low level of awareness mentioned above, only one-sixth (16%) of all employers surveyed planned to offer these new standards within the next five years, although this figure was double that seen in 2015. Larger employers were more likely to plan to move to apprenticeship standards, with 45% of those with 100 or more staff on site intending to offer these within the next five years, rising to 68% of employers with 250 or more employees on site.

Employers in the public sector were more likely than commercial or third sector employers to move onto the new standards within the next five years (28%, 14% and 18% of all employers respectively). By main subject area, those offering Business (23%) or Arts and Media (25%) were the most likely to plan to move to the new standards.

There were some other notable differences in the planned use of apprenticeship standards by apprenticeship history, recruitment, and offering:

- Those offering apprenticeships for a longer timeframe were more likely to think that they would move to the new standards in the next five years – one-fifth (19%) of those who have been offering apprenticeships for five or more years planned to do this, compared to 10% who have offered apprenticeships for less than three years.
- Employers who had six or more recent apprentices were more likely than those with fewer completers to think that they would move to the new standards within five years (44% vs 24% of those with three to five completers, 18% of those with two completers, and 12% of those with one completer).
- Employers only taking on existing staff onto an apprenticeship were less likely than average to think that they would move to the new standards in the next five years (12%).

⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482754/BIS-15-604-english-apprenticeships-our-2020-vision.pdf

Whether apprentices had Maths and English GCSE at start of apprenticeship

Recent apprenticeship policy in England has made it the responsibility of the government and employers to ensure that everyone has a basic level of English and Maths in the workplace, thus continuing to increase emphasis on developing these skills within the population. It is expected that apprentices will achieve a basic level of English and Maths of at least level 1 and if possible level 2, with help and support from their employer⁷ (October 2016).

In this context, employers were asked whether their apprentices already had a Maths or English GCSE at grade A*-C when they started. Two fifths (40%) reported that all of their apprentices had both a Maths and English GCSE at A*-C, which represented an increase from 2015 (34%). However, half (50%) said that they had **at least one** apprentice who **did not** have such grades when they started.

Employers providing a Health apprenticeship as their main subject area were most likely to take on apprentices without a Maths or English GCSE grade A*-C (69%). This was also common in Retail (54%). By contrast, employers with an ICT (23%) or Business (38%) main subject area were less likely to take on apprentices without these grades.

Importance of Maths and English GCSE to employers

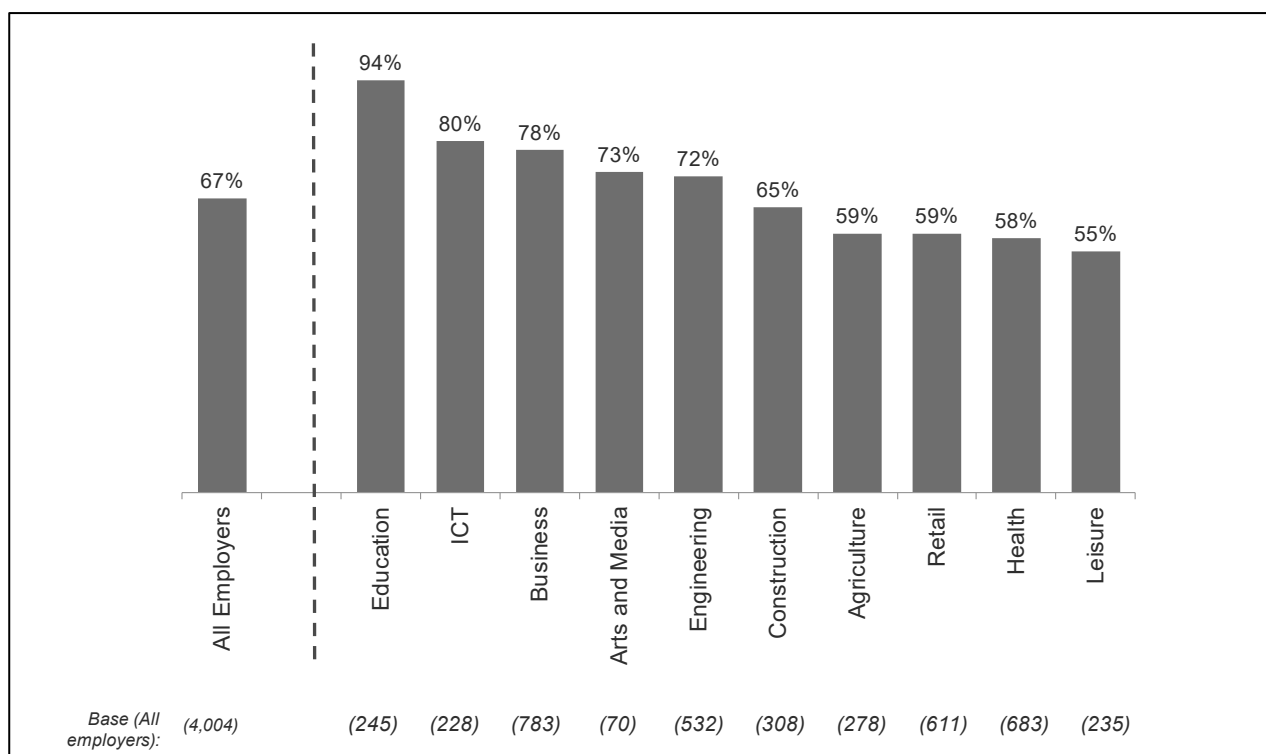
The majority of employers (67%) considered it important for their apprentices to have or to achieve A*-C grades in Maths and English, with a third (33%) considering it to be very important. In comparison, just under a fifth (18%) did not think it was important.

There was substantial variation by subject area of apprenticeship. Nearly all employers providing Education considered Maths and English GCSE to be important (94%), compared to about four-fifths of those providing ICT (80%) and Business (78%) apprenticeships. By contrast, only just over half (55%) of employers providing Leisure apprenticeships considered Maths and English GCSE to be important, as Figure 7.3 shows.

7

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562401/Apprenticeship_funding_from_May_2017.pdf

Figure 7.3 The importance of Maths and English GCSE, by main subject area



Larger employers were more likely to consider Maths and English GCSE important with three-quarters (77%) of employers with 100 or more employees at their site saying this, rising to over four-fifths (83%) among employers with 250 or more staff.

Employers who specifically recruited for apprentices only were more likely to consider Maths and English at GCSE important than employees who only put existing employees through their apprenticeships (70% and 62% respectively).

Chapter 8 Satisfaction and Future Plans

This chapter looks at employers' satisfaction with their apprenticeship programmes, both overall and with specific elements. It also looks at employer advocacy of apprenticeships, the benefits they see, elements they wish to change and their plans for future apprenticeship provision.

Key findings

- **Levels of overall employer satisfaction with the apprenticeship programme remain high (84%) but have decreased (slightly but statistically significantly) from 2015 (87%),** returning to 2014 levels. Overall 6% were dissatisfied.
- **Employers were most satisfied with the quality of the assessment carried out by their provider (85%), the quality of training (84%) how the provider offered training and / or assessment in a flexible way (83%), and the support and communication from their provider (81%).** Levels of satisfaction with these elements of apprenticeships are lower than in 2015.
- **Eight out of ten (82%) employers would recommend apprenticeships to others.** Four in ten (40%) would recommend apprenticeships to other employers without being asked (an increase on the 37% seen in 2015 and 35% in 2014).
- **Employers experienced a wide range of benefits** as a result of training apprentices. The most frequently mentioned was **developing skills relevant to the organisation (86%),** followed by increased productivity, product or service quality and staff morale which were each cited by three-quarters of employers.
- **The vast majority of employers remained committed to apprenticeships.** Over eight in ten (84%) employers planned to continue to offer apprenticeships, a slight decrease from the 86% who said they would continue in 2015, but still significantly higher than the 78% seen in 2014. Of those employers who did plan to continue offering apprenticeships (or who were unsure), a third (31%) intended to increase the number of apprenticeship places that they offered at their site, higher than the proportion seen in 2015 (29%). A further 60% expected their numbers to remain at the same level, and 6% expected a decrease.
- **There has been a slight increase in the proportion of employers saying they planned to stop offering apprenticeships, compared to 2015.** Eight per cent were planning to stop offering entirely, compared to six per cent in 2015. A quarter (25%) attributed their reduction or ceasing of apprenticeship provision to not looking to recruit new staff, and 16% stated that they could not currently afford to offer more.

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

Satisfaction

- The vast majority of employers rated themselves as “satisfied” with the apprenticeship programme (84% gave a rating of 6 to 10), but this has decreased slightly since 2015 (87%).
- Satisfaction with a number of specific elements of the apprenticeship programme also dropped over this period:
 - Their ability to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of the apprenticeship training (from 65% in 2015 to 62% in 2017).
 - The quality of the training delivered by the provider (86% to 84%).
 - The support and communication from the provider (84% to 81%).
 - How the provider offered training and / or assessment in a flexible way to meet their needs (86% to 83%).
 - The quality of the assessment carried out by the provider (88% to 85%).

Advocacy

- A slightly higher proportion in 2017 said they would recommend apprenticeships to other employers without being asked (from 37% in 2015 to 40%).

Benefits

- Employers’ views of certain benefits deriving from apprenticeships has also changed over time:
 - The proportion citing that their apprenticeship programme had helped them win business has decreased slightly, from 49% in 2015 to 46% in 2017.
 - The proportion citing that it has improved productivity has increased, from 76% in 2015 to 78% in 2017.
 - The proportion citing that it has reduced the overall wage bill has increased, from 36% in 2015 to 39% in 2017.

Future provision

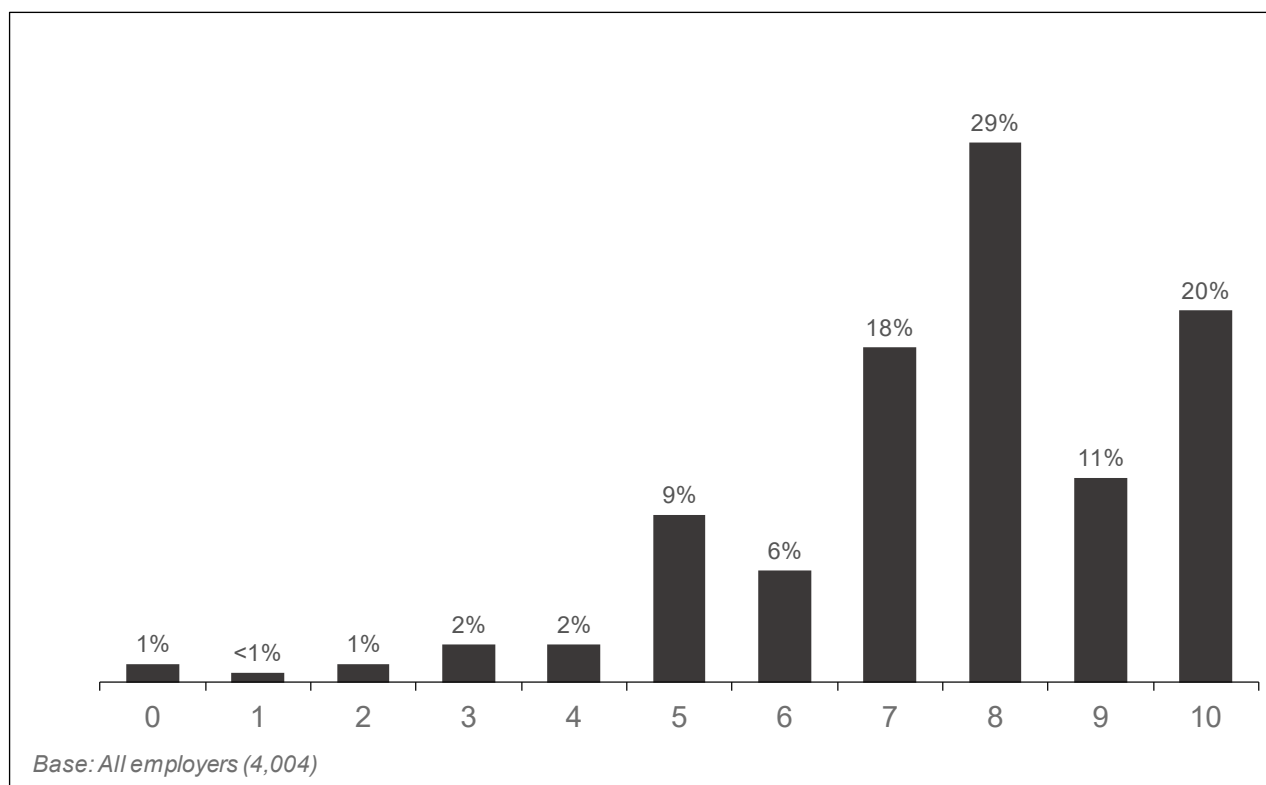
- The vast majority (84%) of employers planned to continue offering apprenticeships in future, representing a slight drop from 2015 (86%).
- Of those employers who did intend to continue offering apprenticeships, approaching a third (31%, or 29% of all employers) said they intended to increase their apprenticeship numbers. This is higher than the proportion seen in 2015 (25%, or 23% of all employers).
- Over a quarter of employers (28%) would like to change some element of the apprenticeship programme content, structure, delivery or duration, an increase from 24% in 2015.

Overall Satisfaction

Employers gave a rating of their overall satisfaction with the level and subject area of the apprenticeship programmes they offer that they considered to be their “main” one⁸.

Ratings were given on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 was very dissatisfied, 5 was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 was very satisfied. Employers were more likely to be satisfied than not. Figure 8.1 shows the distribution of responses.

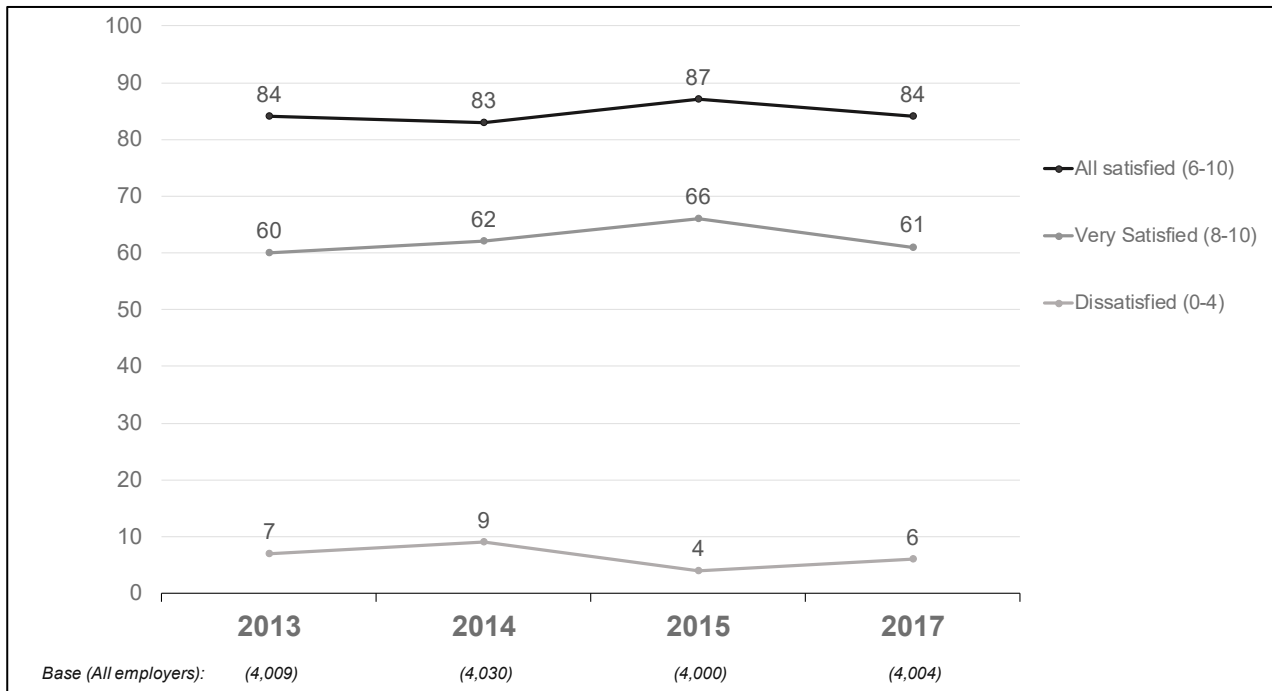
Figure 8.1 Overall satisfaction rating (out of ten)



⁸ 90% of employers provided apprenticeships in only one subject area. The remaining 10% were asked which subject area they considered to be most important to their business; we refer to this as their ‘main’ subject area.

Although the vast majority of employers still rated themselves as “satisfied” with the apprenticeship programme (84% gave a rating of 6 to 10), this proportion was slightly (but statistically significantly) lower than the 87% seen in 2015. The gains in satisfaction made from 2014 (83%) to 2015 (87%) have not been sustained. Figure 8.2 shows the changes in satisfaction over time.

Figure 8.2 Changes in overall satisfaction with apprenticeships over time

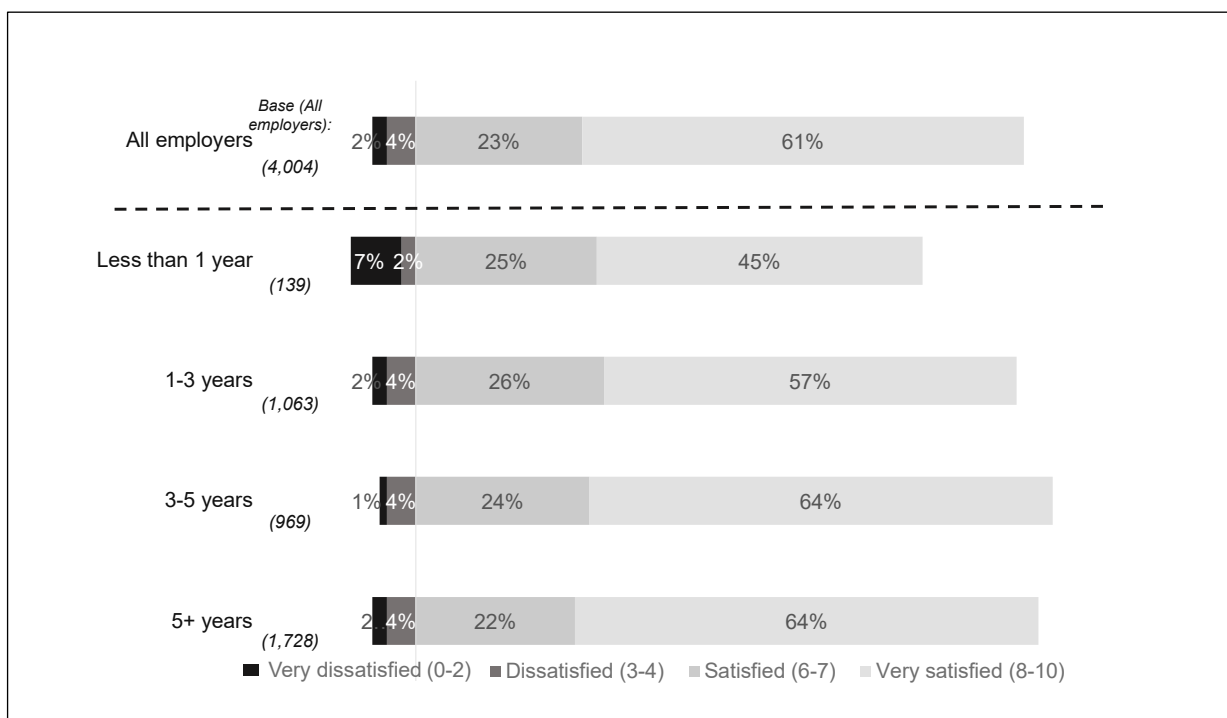


Satisfaction was significantly lower among employers who were new to offering apprenticeships. Just seven in ten (70%) employers who had been involved in apprenticeships for less than a year were satisfied (a rating of 6-10), compared to 84% overall, and 7% said they were very dissatisfied (a rating of 0-2) compared to just 2% overall.

This difference is much more pronounced than in 2015, when 81% of employers involved for less than a year were satisfied compared to 87% overall, although 7% were also very dissatisfied in 2015. The fall in satisfaction in this group is clearly a cause for concern.

Figure 8.3 shows the differences in satisfaction based on the length of time offering apprenticeships.

Figure 8.3 Satisfaction by length of time offering apprenticeships



Differences in satisfaction can also be seen by subject area. “Newer” subjects such as Education and Leisure are among those commanding the highest satisfaction scores, whilst the more “traditional” Construction is among the lowest.

Table 8.1 shows the breakdown over time. The fall in satisfaction is seen almost across the board, although not statistically significant in each individual subject, except in Engineering where the decrease of 6 percentage points from 87% to 81% is statistically significant.

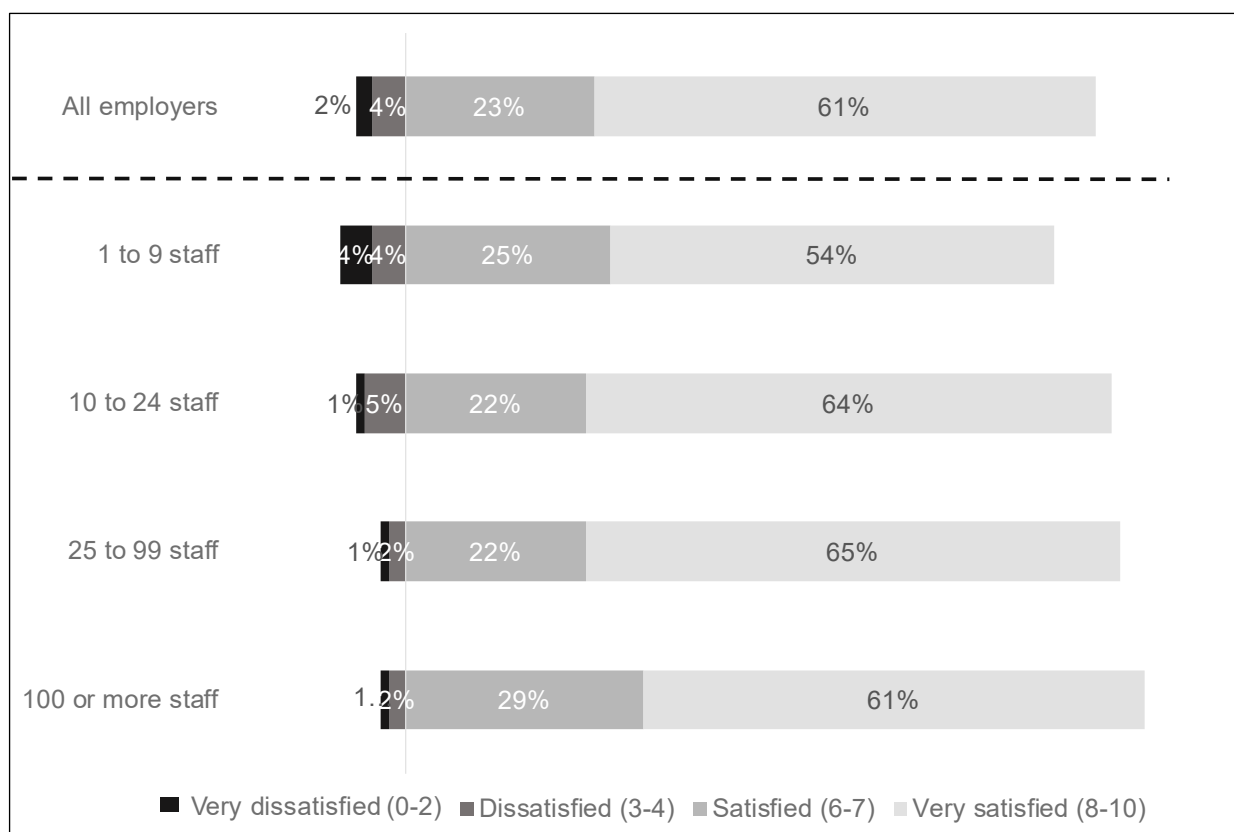
The proportion of employers in the evaluation offering apprenticeships in Engineering has increased from 10% in 2014 to 16% in 2017 (see Chapter 4); this expansion may explain some of the decrease as we have already seen employers who are newer to apprenticeships tend to be less satisfied.

Table 8.1 Total satisfied (scoring 6-10) by main subject area

	2017		2015		2014	
	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%
All employers	4,004	84	4,000	87	4,030	83
Agriculture	278	84	270	85	99	82
Arts and Media	70	67	51	76	n/a	n/a
Business	783	87	854	89	1,118	83
Construction	308	76	345	77	331	76
Education	245	87	201	85	n/a	n/a
Engineering	532	81	495	87	401	83
Health	683	89	720	90	856	86
ICT	228	85	179	84	83	80
Leisure	235	86	240	91	126	84
Retail	611	79	645	83	867	84

As in previous evaluations, smaller employers were less likely to be satisfied than larger employers, with 79% of employers with 1 to 9 staff satisfied, compared to 89% among those with 100 or more staff. Dissatisfaction (a score of 0-4) decreases steadily as employer size increases, from 8% of employers with 1 to 9 staff down to just 3% of employers with 100 or more staff. This is indicative of the challenges of tailoring apprenticeship programmes to suit smaller employers and the specific issues faced by employers with a small workforce and no dedicated HR/recruitment/training function. Figure 8.4 shows satisfaction by employer size.

Figure 8.4 Overall satisfaction by employer size

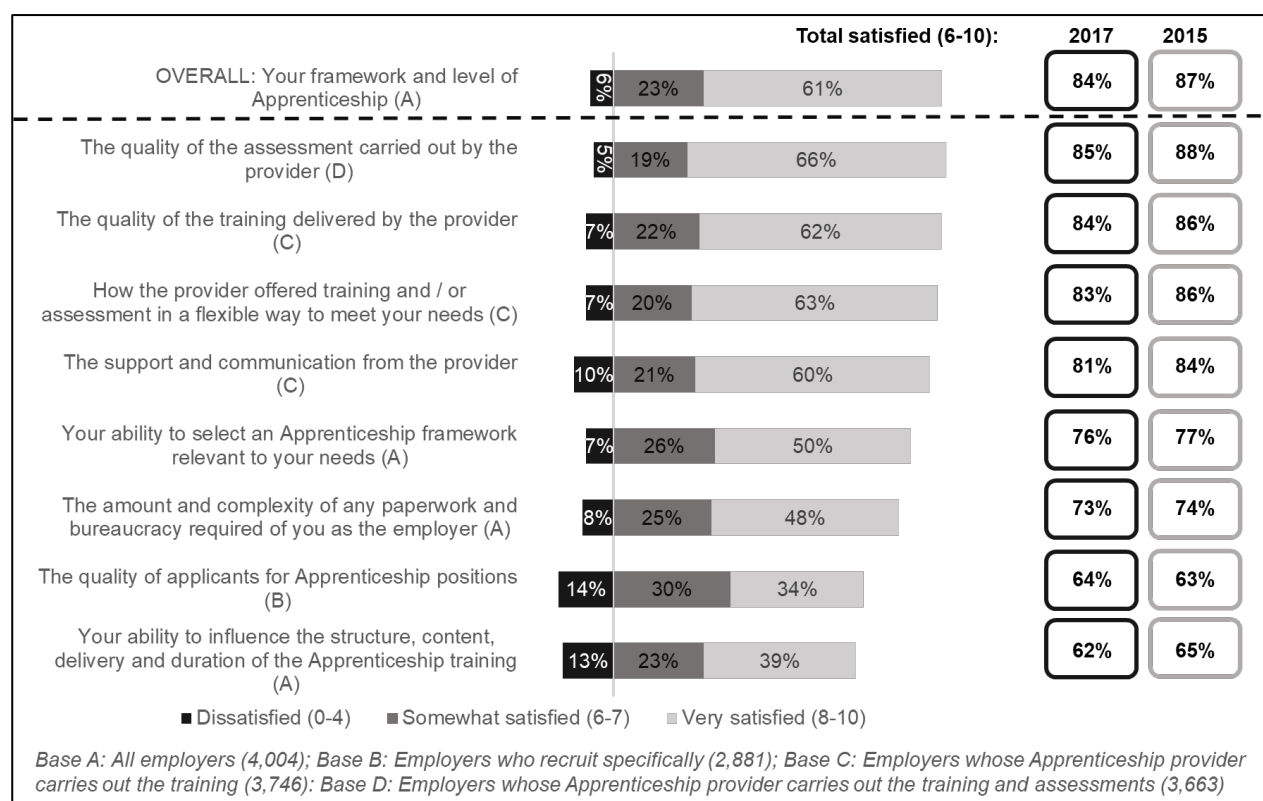


Satisfaction with specific elements of apprenticeships

Employers were asked to rate their satisfaction with eight specific elements of their apprenticeship programmes. Figure 8.5 shows the results. The elements employers were most satisfied with related to the service they received from their training providers in training and assessing their apprentices, and the relationship they had with their provider. Areas the employers were least satisfied with were the influence they had over the content and delivery of the apprenticeship, and the quality of the applicants they received.

The slight fall in overall satisfaction was seen across all elements of the apprenticeship programmes (although it was not statistically significant in all cases).

Figure 8.5 Satisfaction with specific elements of apprenticeships



The main level of apprenticeship offered by the employer had little bearing on satisfaction with each of the elements tested. However, there were considerable differences in satisfaction by main subject area (shown in Table 8.2). Employers offering apprenticeships in Health subjects were the most satisfied overall (89%); this appears to be driven by a good service from their training provider, including the quality of training and assessment, the support and communication with the provider and the flexibility of the training delivery. These employers were also more likely than average to be satisfied with their ability to select a relevant framework and the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy required. Employers offering Leisure apprenticeships were also more satisfied than average with their training providers, but were less satisfied with the quality of applicants they received.

Although employers offering Business (87%) and Education (86%) apprenticeships were more satisfied than average overall, they were no more satisfied than average with each of the specific elements apart from the quality of applicants they received for their apprenticeship programmes. Employers offering Education apprenticeships were less satisfied than average with the quality of training and assessment, their ability to select a relevant framework and the influence they had over the content. This suggests that the component parts do not have as much influence on overall satisfaction in Education as in the other subject areas. It may be that their satisfaction with their apprenticeship programme, and the performance and contribution of their apprentices to the organisation, outweighs any logistical difficulties. Alternatively, it may simply be that as

education providers themselves they understand the challenges in running an effective training programme, so whilst they are better placed to spot shortcomings, they may also be more forgiving when it comes to their overall judgment of the programme.

Employers offering apprenticeships in Arts and Media gave the lowest overall satisfaction rating for their apprenticeships (67%). These employers were particularly dissatisfied with the service received from their training provider: scores for these factors were consistently far below the average (for example, 62% were satisfied with the quality of training, compared to 84% overall). Arts and Media apprenticeships are still quite new, so this could be indicative that the programmes are still finding their feet and also that the employers in these sectors are getting used to apprenticeship training.

Overall satisfaction for Construction-related apprenticeships was also lower than average (76%), as it was in 2015 (77%). This appears to be driven by the ability to select a relevant framework, the amount of influence employers have over the content of the programme, and the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy involved. They were also less likely than average to be satisfied with the quality of training and assessment, and the flexibility of the training provider. This difference in satisfaction cannot simply be explained by the profile of the construction industry, even though it is dominated by small employers who we have already seen have lower levels of satisfaction overall. The lower levels of satisfaction among employers offering this subject area are seen across all sizes of organisation.

This may reflect a genuine issue with apprenticeship quality or design for the sector, or higher employer expectations in a sector where apprenticeships have a long history. However, it should be considered that apprenticeships are the industry standard method of recruiting and training those new to certain construction trades, so employers may feel tied in to using them. This means that, unlike in most other sectors, apprenticeships would tend to be used by employers who would (if they felt they had a choice) entirely avoid using formal training schemes such as apprenticeships. It is likely that this type of employer also exists in other sectors, but they would be unlikely to pro-actively choose to use apprenticeships.

Table 8.2 Satisfaction with specific elements of apprenticeship programme, by subject area

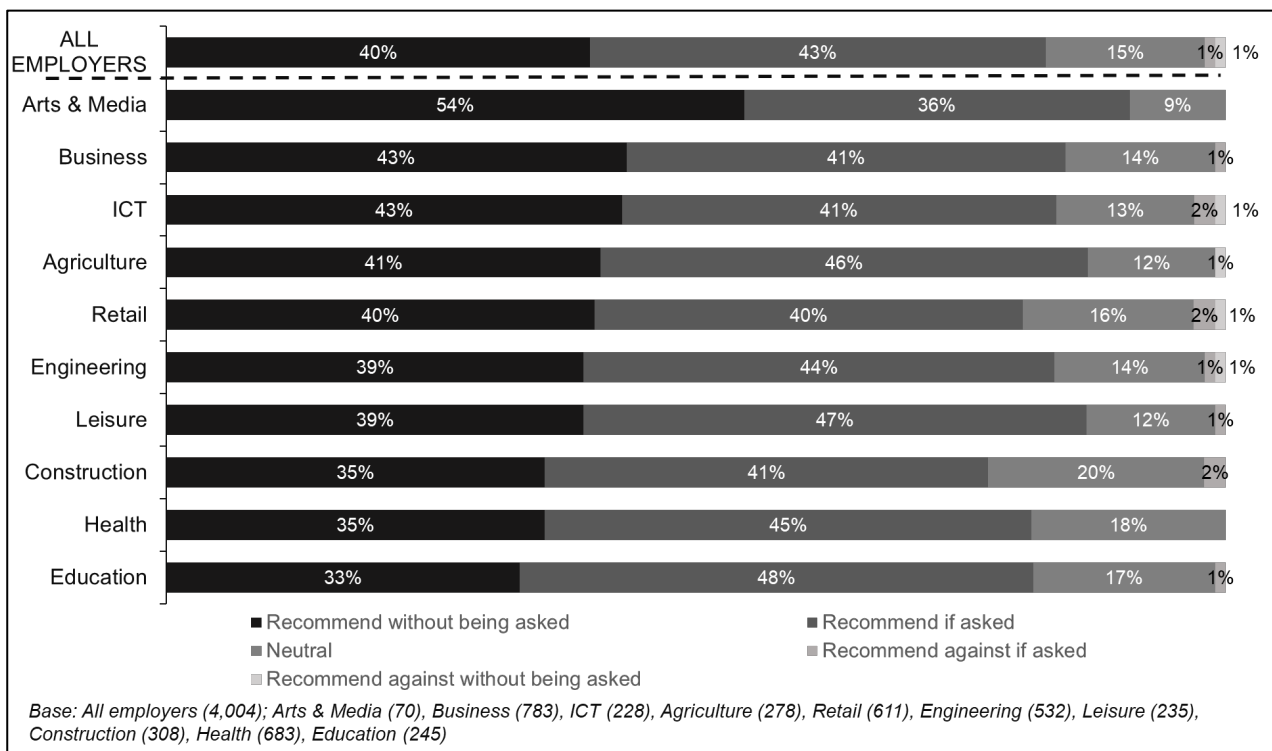
	All employers	Agriculture	Arts and Media	Business	Construction	Education	Engineering	Health	ICT	Leisure	Retail
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All employers</i>	4,004	278	70	783	308	245	532	683	228	235	611
Overall satisfaction	84	84	67	87	76	86	81	89	85	86	79
Ability to select framework relevant to needs	76	74	68	78	71	70	75	79	75	79	74
Ability to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of training	62	60	52	63	51	51	58	62	55	60	68
Amount and complexity of paperwork required	73	72	71	73	67	71	69	76	72	76	73
<i>Base: Employers whose provider carries out the training</i>	3,746	254	67	737	278	233	491	657	209	226	567
Quality of training	84	85	62	85	78	80	81	88	79	87	82
Support and communication from provider	81	84	58	81	80	79	77	85	77	85	80
Flexibility of training/assessment	83	84	64	82	77	80	78	89	77	91	84
<i>Base: Employers whose provider carries out the training and assessment</i>	3,663	251	67	717	270	230	485	642	204	223	550
Quality of assessment	85	88	65	84	80	78	82	90	77	89	84
<i>Base: Employers who recruit specifically</i>	2,881	223	65	532	267	178	426	443	204	154	362
Quality of applicants	64	63	65	71	58	70	65	65	66	70	53

Advocacy

Four in ten (40%) employers said they would recommend apprenticeships to other employers without being asked. This was an increase on the 37% seen in 2015. A further 43% said they would recommend apprenticeships if they were asked. Hence, overall, 83% of employers who would speak favourably about apprenticeships to other employers (the same percentage as in 2015). Just 1% of employers would be critical of apprenticeships if they were asked, and 1% would be critical without being asked.

In general, advocacy was linked quite closely to satisfaction with employers who said they would recommend apprenticeships likely to be among the most satisfied. This was not a strong correlation, however: 63% of employers who said they would be neutral or recommend against apprenticeships also said that they were satisfied with apprenticeships. This difference is demonstrated when we look at advocacy by subject area: some of the subject areas that scored lowest for satisfaction are in fact the most likely to recommend apprenticeships, and vice versa. Figure 8.6 shows the breakdown of advocacy by subject area.

Figure 8.6 Advocacy by main subject area



Despite being the least satisfied with apprenticeships, employers offering apprenticeships in Arts and Media were the most likely to recommend apprenticeships without being asked, suggesting they still like the concept despite their relatively high dissatisfaction with the service from their training provider. Conversely employers offering Education and Health apprenticeships, who were among the most satisfied, were the least likely to

recommend apprenticeships without being asked (33% and 35% respectively). It may be that for many employers in these sectors, their use of apprenticeships is determined by central government guidance. In that situation, even if an employer were very happy with their apprenticeship programme, it would make little sense to recommend it to other employers in the same situation.

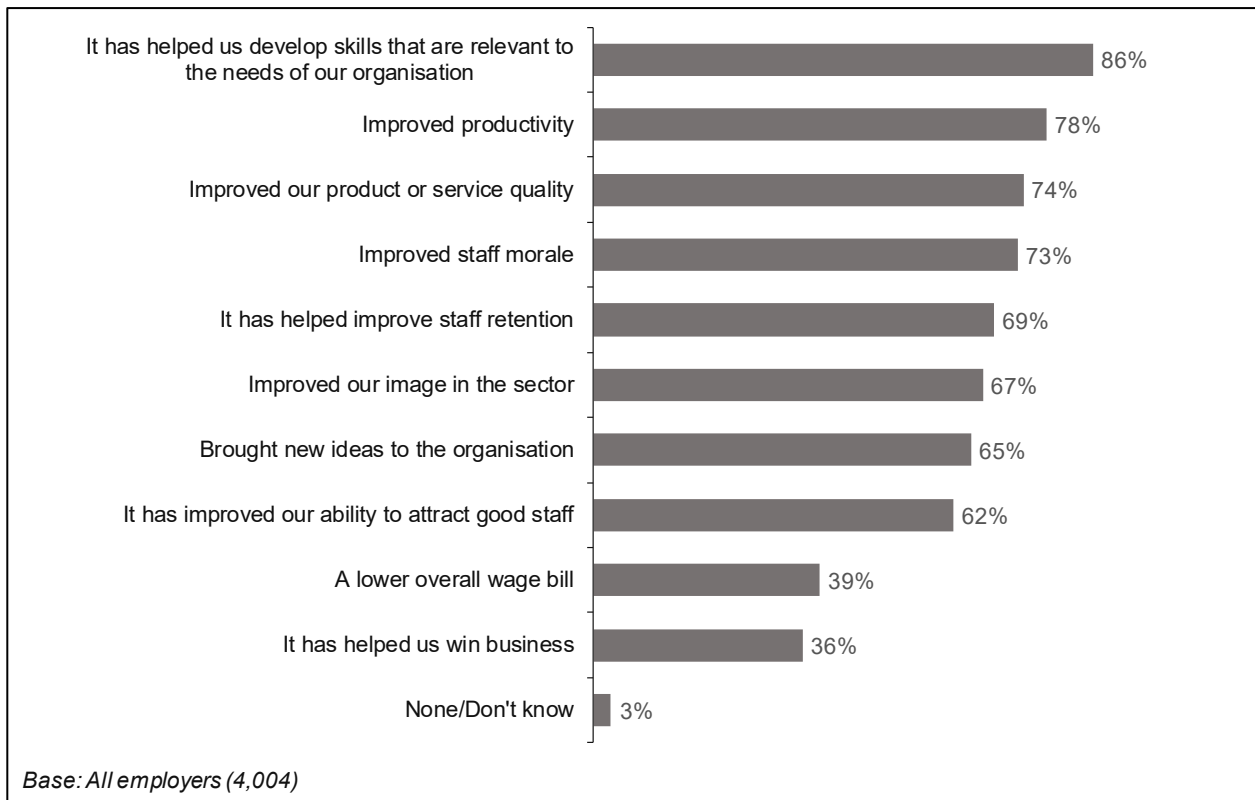
Employers with more apprentices were more likely to say they would recommend apprenticeships to other employers: 38% of employers who had had only 1 apprentice completion during the survey period would recommend apprenticeships without being asked, rising to 42% with 2 apprentices, 44% with 3 to 9 apprentices, and 57% of employers who had had 10 or more completions in the period. This is not surprising, as those with a high number of apprentices are likely to believe in the benefits of the scheme to invest so heavily in it.

Employers who had specifically recruited all of their apprentices were also more likely to say they would provide a recommendation without being asked (43%), compared to just 31% of employers who only offered apprenticeships to existing employees.

Benefits to the employer















































The vast majority of employers (97%) reported that they experienced at least one of the benefits listed in the survey as a result of offering apprenticeships. On average, employers reported 7.8 of the ten benefits which were asked about. Most commonly, apprenticeships helped them to develop skills relevant to the organisation. Other frequently cited benefits included increased productivity, improving the quality of products and services and an increase in staff morale. Figure 8.7 shows the proportion of employers who said they had experienced each of the listed benefits.

Figure 8.7 Benefits of offering apprenticeships (prompted)



Employers offering Health apprenticeships reported experiencing the most benefits with a mean of 7.0 out of the 10 listed benefits. They were more likely than average to report improved staff retention (75%) and staff morale (77%), improvements to their product or services quality (86%) and relevant skills development (91%). Employers offering apprenticeships in Education saw the smallest number of benefits (average 5.7); this is despite being among the most satisfied. However, many of the benefits listed were “business benefits” that would be of little evidence to an Education provider – this is evidenced by just 1% saying their apprenticeships had helped them to win new business. Table 8.3 shows where the benefits seen differed significantly from the average for each subject area.

Table 8.3 Differences in benefits seen by subject area

	Benefits experienced as a result of offering and training apprentices – significant differences to the all subject area average	
	Base	Significant differences above  or below  average
Agriculture	278	 Lower overall wage bill (47%)  Helped develop relevant skills (80%)  Improved product or service quality (67%)
Arts and Media	70	 Brought new ideas (79%)  Improved image in the sector (79%)  Improved staff retention (43%)
Business	783	 Brought new ideas (69%)  Improved image in sector (63%)  Helped win business (31%)
Construction	308	 Improved image in sector (74%)  Helped develop relevant skills (76%)  Improved productivity (73%)  Improved staff morale (64%)  Improved product or services quality (64%)  Brought new ideas (46%)  Lowered wage bill (31%)
Education	245	 Improved staff retention (55%)  Improved image in sector (51%)  Improved ability to attract good staff (46%)  Helped win business (1%)
Engineering	532	 Helped win business (40%)  Helped develop relevant skills (83%)  Improved staff morale (67%)  Improved product or service quality (65%)  Brought new ideas (58%)  Improved ability to attract good staff (58%)  Lowered wage bill (30%)
Health	683	 Helped develop relevant skills (91%)  Improved product or services quality (86%)  Improved staff morale (77%)  Improved staff retention (75%)  Improved image in sector (74%)  Brought new ideas (72%)  Improved ability to attract good staff (70%)
ICT	228	 Lowered wage bill (47%)  Improved staff retention (62%)  Improved image in sector (60%)
Leisure	235	 Helped develop relevant skills (92%)  Improved product or services quality (84%)  Brought new ideas (72%)  Lowered wage bill (46%)  Helped win business (23%)
Retail	611	 Helped win business (45%)  Improved ability to attract good staff (58%)

The benefits seen by employers also differed by size. Smaller employers were more likely to say offering apprenticeships has helped them win business (43% of those with 1 to 9 staff and 40% of those with 10 to 24, compared to 29% of those with 25 to 99 and 24% of those with 100 or more staff). It may be for these smaller employers having apprentices makes them stand out, whereas it is more common among larger organisations, so less of a unique selling point. Conversely, large employers were more likely to see the following benefits:

- Helped develop relevant skills (94% of 100+ staff, compared to 86% overall);
- Improved image in the sector (75% of 100+, vs. 67% overall);
- Brought new ideas (74% of 100+, vs. 65% overall);
- Improved ability to attract good staff (69% of 100+, vs. 62% overall).

Future provision of apprenticeships

The vast majority of employers planned to continue offering apprenticeships in future (84 %). This is a slight decrease on the 86% who said they would continue to offer apprenticeships in 2015, but still higher than the 78% seen in 2014.

There was some variation by subject area with employers offering apprenticeships in Health most likely to continue (91%) and those in Arts and Media least likely (72%). It is no surprise that these were also the subject areas with the highest and lowest levels of satisfaction with apprenticeships.

In contrast, 8% of employers said they did not intend to continue offering apprenticeships, and a further 8% were not sure or said that it depended on circumstances (compared to 6% and 7% respectively in 2015). This was more likely to be the case for the smallest employers, with 15% of those with 1 to 9 staff saying they would stop offering apprenticeships and 10% unsure. Reasons for this are explored later in this section.

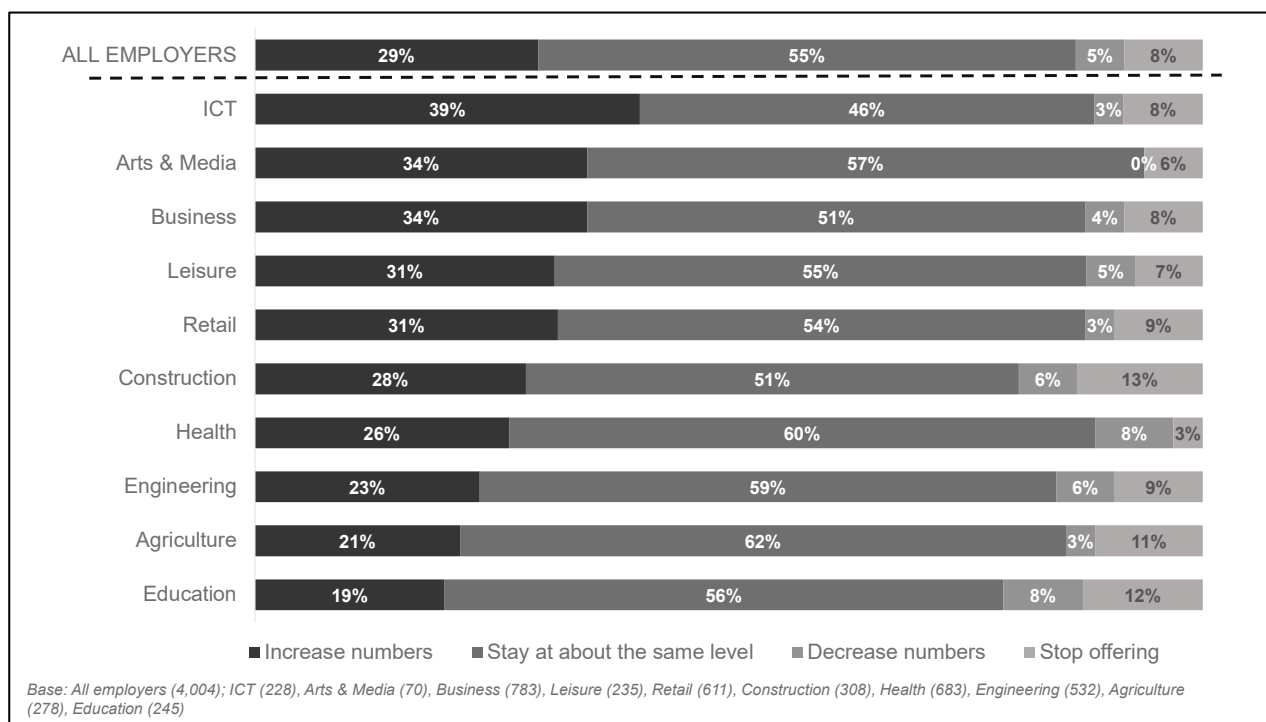
The data suggests a likely increase in apprenticeship provision. Of those employers who did intend to continue offering apprenticeships, approaching a third (31%, or 29% of all employers) intended to increase their apprenticeship numbers, compared to 60% expecting a decrease (equivalent to 5% of all employers). The proportion intending to increase their provision is higher than in 2015 (25%, or 23% of all), and will go some way to offsetting the slight increase in the proportion saying they plan to stop offering apprenticeships. A further 60% (or 55% of all employers) expect their numbers to remain at the same level. These findings were broadly in line with the recent Employer

Perspectives Survey (EPS16) which asked the same question of employers currently offering apprenticeships and who were planning to continue doing so⁹.

Additionally, EPS16 showed that 18% of employers **not** currently offering apprenticeships plan to start doing so in the future, and a third of these (6% overall) plan to do so in the next 12 months. The EPS modelled the impact this would have on apprenticeship numbers: across the whole of the UK, the additional 110,000 employers planning on starting to offer apprenticeships in the next 12 month offset the 50,000 planning to stop offering apprenticeships altogether (or who were unsure whether they would continue to offer them), leaving a net gain of 60,000 employers to apprenticeships.

Figure 8.8 shows how future intentions vary by subject area. Employers whose main apprenticeship subject area was ICT, Arts and Media or Business were most likely to say they intended to increase their apprentice numbers. Conversely, employers whose main subject area was Education or Construction were the most likely to plan to decrease or stop their apprenticeship offering.

Figure 8.8 Future intentions for apprenticeship numbers by subject area



Large employers and those with the highest number of apprentices completing during the survey period were more likely than smaller employers and those with fewer apprentices to intend to increase their apprentice numbers. Half of employers with 100 or more staff

⁹ Shury et al (2017) *Employer Perspectives Survey 2016* (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-perspectives-survey-2016>)

(51%) planned to increase their number of apprentices in future, compared to around a quarter of employers in each of the smaller size bands (25% of 1 to 9, 26% of 10 to 24 and 28% of those with 25 to 99 staff). Similarly, 45% employers with 6 or more apprentices completing during the survey period (an indication of higher numbers of apprentices generally) planned an increase, compared to 30% of those with 5 or fewer. This suggests that the increase in the total number of apprentices may be larger than headline figures based on employer numbers suggest, since larger employers tend to train more apprentices per organisation.

The intention to increase or decrease apprentice numbers was closely related to employers' growth expectations, as might be predicted. Almost half (46%) who were expecting significant growth intended an increase in apprenticeship numbers (compared to 29% overall). In contrast over a fifth (22%) of employers expecting to contract intended to stop offering apprenticeships, compared to 8% overall.

Three in ten (30%) employers that had been offering apprenticeships for less than one year said they intended to stop offering apprenticeships, suggesting this was a one-off exercise for them. Encouragingly, however, 25% of this group intended to increase numbers, which was not significantly different from the figure among all employers.

General management of staff numbers was the main motivation for employers' future plans for apprentice numbers. Employers looking to increase the number of apprenticeships they offer most commonly said this was because the company was expanding (52%) and 15% said it was due to high staff turnover. Smaller employers were particularly likely to say expansion was behind their plans to increase apprenticeship involvement, with 62% of employers with 1 to 9 staff giving this as a reason compared to just 31% of employers with 100 or more staff.

Conversely, a quarter (25%) of those looking to decrease or stop offering apprenticeships altogether said this was because they were not recruiting new staff, 12% said it was because the business was not growing, and 6% said that it was due to low turnover.

The funding reforms, discussed in the next chapter, were reasons both for expansion and contraction of apprenticeship programmes. A tenth (10%) of employers planning to increase their number of apprentices said it was to ensure they claimed back their whole Levy payment (39% among the 51% of large employers with 100+ staff planning to increase numbers), and 4% cited funding changes more generally. Conversely, 10% of those planning to decrease numbers or stop offering apprenticeships altogether blamed the funding reform, and 5% specifically said it was because they needed to start paying.

Employers looking to increase their apprenticeship numbers were positive about the impact of the programmes developing on the skills the organisation needed (26%), and that apprentices were becoming easier to recruit (8%).

Employers looking to decrease numbers often cited negative experiences: 13% said that their previous apprentices had not been up to the required standard, 8% blamed bad experiences with their training provider(s) and 5% a lack of good candidates.

Table 8.4 displays the most common reasons employers gave for their plans to increase, retain or decrease apprenticeship numbers.

Table 8.4 Top reasons for changes in apprentice numbers

Increase		Remain the same		Decrease	
Reason	%	Reason	%	Reason	%
Business expanding	52	Content with current number	51	Not currently recruiting	25
Good way to meet skill needs	26	Low staff turnover	16	Cannot afford more	16
High staff turnover	15	Not currently recruiting	14	Previous apprentices not up to standard	13
Reclaim Levy payment	10	Business not growing	12	Business not growing	12
Becoming easier to recruit	8	Cannot afford more	8	Funding reform	10
Funding changes	4	Staff all fully skilled	6	Staff all fully skilled	9
Can train according to own requirements	3	No capacity to take on more	4	Bad experience with training providers	8
Increased options (incl. degree level)	3	Keep balance between skilled staff and apprentices	3	Low staff turnover	6
Help community/ young people	3	Will depend on number of good applicants	3	Lack of good candidates	5
Introduction of apprenticeship standards	3	Prefer to recruit experienced staff	2	Need to start paying for them	5
				Prefer to recruit experienced staff	5

What employers would like to change

Over a quarter of employers (28%) would like to change some element of the apprenticeship programme content, structure, delivery or duration. Most commonly this

was wanting the apprenticeship to be more closely tailored to the needs of their organisation (6% of all employers).

Employers who wanted to see changes were far less likely to be satisfied with apprenticeships overall (68%, compared to 91% who had no suggestions for changes). This demonstrates that the changes they were suggesting are not just “nice-to-haves” – they directly impact how well the employer thinks of the programme as a whole.

The relationship with the training provider was also commonly mentioned: 4% of all employers wanted improved communications with their training provider, 3% for their provider to be more organised and 3% wanted more support from their training provider. The apprenticeship content was not felt to be challenging enough by 4%.

Employers offering apprenticeships in the Arts and Media were more likely than average to want to see changes (47%). In particular, 28% wanted to see the course more closely tailored to their needs, 11% wanted their training provider to be more organised and 10% wanted improved communication with their training provider.

Employers in the smallest size band (1 to 9 staff) were more likely than average to want to change some element of their apprenticeship programme (34%). They were more likely than average to have had issues with their training provider, with 5% wanting improved communications, 4% for them to be more organised and 4% more support. This compares to just 3%, 2% and 1% respectively for those with 100 or more staff.

Employers in the Other Services sector (which includes activities such as hairdressing and personal care, museums and the arts) were most likely to want to change elements (45%); this sector is dominated by employers offering Retail apprenticeships. This suggests these apprenticeship programmes are not working as well for employers in this sector as in other sectors (the Accommodation and Food sector is also dominated by Retail apprenticeships, yet employers in this sector were the least likely to suggest any changes at just 18%). In particular, Other Services employers wanted to improve the quality of assessments and training, and they wanted the apprenticeships to be longer and more challenging (6% each).

Employers in the Information and Communication sector were also more likely than average to want to make changes to the apprenticeship programmes; this sector is dominated by ICT and Business apprenticeships. The proportion wanting to better tailor the apprenticeship to their own needs was far higher than that seen on average (17%, compared to 6% overall) suggesting the programmes and their content are not well matched to employers in this sector.

Chapter 9 Apprenticeship Funding

The Spring of 2017 saw the introduction of fundamental changes in the way apprenticeships are funded, with the aim of giving employers more control over designing, choosing and paying for their apprenticeship training. The new funding system came into force in May 2017.

The main impact for employers is in the way they pay for apprenticeships and the funding they receive from government to help with this. A Levy payment (of 0.5% of their wage bill) was introduced for employers whose total annual wage bill exceeds £3 million. This payment goes into a digital account along with a 10% top-up from the government, which is redeemable against the employer's own apprenticeship costs if they have any. Unspent funds expire after 24 months. This Levy payment came into force in April 2017.

Employers not in scope of the Levy, and Levy payers wanting to invest more in apprenticeships than they hold in their apprenticeship account, continue to benefit from government contribution to the costs, with this set at 90% of the total cost, leaving employers required to co-invest the remaining 10% of the costs of apprentice training. Funding bands set the maximum amount the government is willing to co-contribute for each framework or standard. There are some uplifts and top-up support for employers and providers who wish to train young or disadvantaged apprentices, and employers with fewer than 50 staff who wish to train 16-18 year-old apprentices continue to benefit from a 100% funding contribution from government. Full details of the new policy can be found on the Government website¹⁰.

Fieldwork for the 2017 survey finished in March 2017 – shortly before the changes were introduced. Therefore, analysis of payment within this chapter is based on the previous system, and exploration of the awareness, understanding and impact of the funding changes is at the point when they were about to be introduced. This therefore provides a useful benchmark on the impact of funding against which future evaluation data can be compared.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-from-may-2017>

Key findings

- **Overall 30% of employers with current apprentices had paid fees to a training provider for the cost of training these apprentices. This was an increase on 2015 (27%) and 2014 (25%).** Of those who had paid fees, the mean amount per annum was £1,350 per apprentice aged 25+, £1,600 for those aged 19-24 and £1,550 for those aged 16-18
- **The new Levy payment was introduced in April 2017 and of employers already offering apprenticeships, 19% of sites are part of organisations which will be eligible for this payment (i.e. indicate their organisation's annual wage bill exceeds £3m).** Employers in Leisure (35%) and Education (34%) were most likely to be eligible for the new payment compared to employers in Agriculture where just seven per cent will be eligible.
- **Six in ten (60%) of all employers were aware that the way apprenticeships are funded in England is changing.** Employers who were eligible for the Levy were far more likely to be aware of the changes (80%) than those who were not (55%).
- **Nearly a third (29%) of eligible employers *who were involved in apprenticeships* were unaware of the forthcoming Levy payment they will be required to make.** This figure was higher among eligible employers where the Head Office of the organisation was involved in decisions on apprenticeships (41%) suggesting the information had not been shared in these organisations or was not relevant to the site interviewed.
- **Less than half of employers (46%) said they felt prepared for the introduction of the funding changes:** this varied from less than a third (31%) of employers with fewer than 10 staff to 79% of those with 100 or more employees. One in eight (12%) of employers with fewer than 10 staff said they did not foresee any changes for their business as a result of the reforms.
- **Over a third of employers who were aware of the funding reforms (37%) predicted an impact on the number of apprentices they train.** A fifth (19%) said they expected the number of apprentices they train to increase, whereas 15% expected a decrease and 2% expected to stop offering apprenticeships altogether.
- **Employers eligible for the Levy were far more likely to expect an increase (44%) than decrease (9%) in their apprenticeship numbers, demonstrating the positive impact the Levy could potentially have on apprenticeship numbers for employers in scope.**
- **However, there is threat to provision amongst smaller employers** with only 9% of employers aware of the changes but not eligible to pay the Levy reporting a likely increase in apprentice numbers as a result of the funding reform compared to 17% who said that they would decrease numbers and 4% who would stop altogether.

Key changes since 2015

(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)

- Three in 10 (30%) employers with current apprentices had paid fees to a training provider for the cost of training these apprentices, up from 27% in 2015.
- Questions around the impact of funding reform were new for 2017, hence no comparison can be made to 2015.

Current fees paid for apprenticeships

Overall 30% of employers with current apprentices had paid fees to a training provider for training these apprentices. This is an increase on 2015 (27%) and 2014 (25%).

Employers were less likely to have contributed to the cost of training for apprentices aged under 19 (19%) than for those aged 19-24 (30%) or 25 or over (26%). Employers whose main subject area was in Engineering were most likely to have paid a provider (53%), and those whose main subject was in Health were the least likely (15%).

Large employers were more likely to have paid fees to a provider for their apprenticeships than small employers: 49% of employers with 100 or more staff at the site had made a contribution, compared to 21% of those with 1-9 staff.

Of those who had paid fees, the amount paid varied widely from just a few pounds to £20,000 per apprentice per annum. The mean amount employers stated they had paid per apprentice per annum varied by age from £1,350 for apprentices aged 25 or older to £1,600 for apprentices aged 19-24 and £1,550 for apprentices aged 16-18.

Eligibility for Levy payments

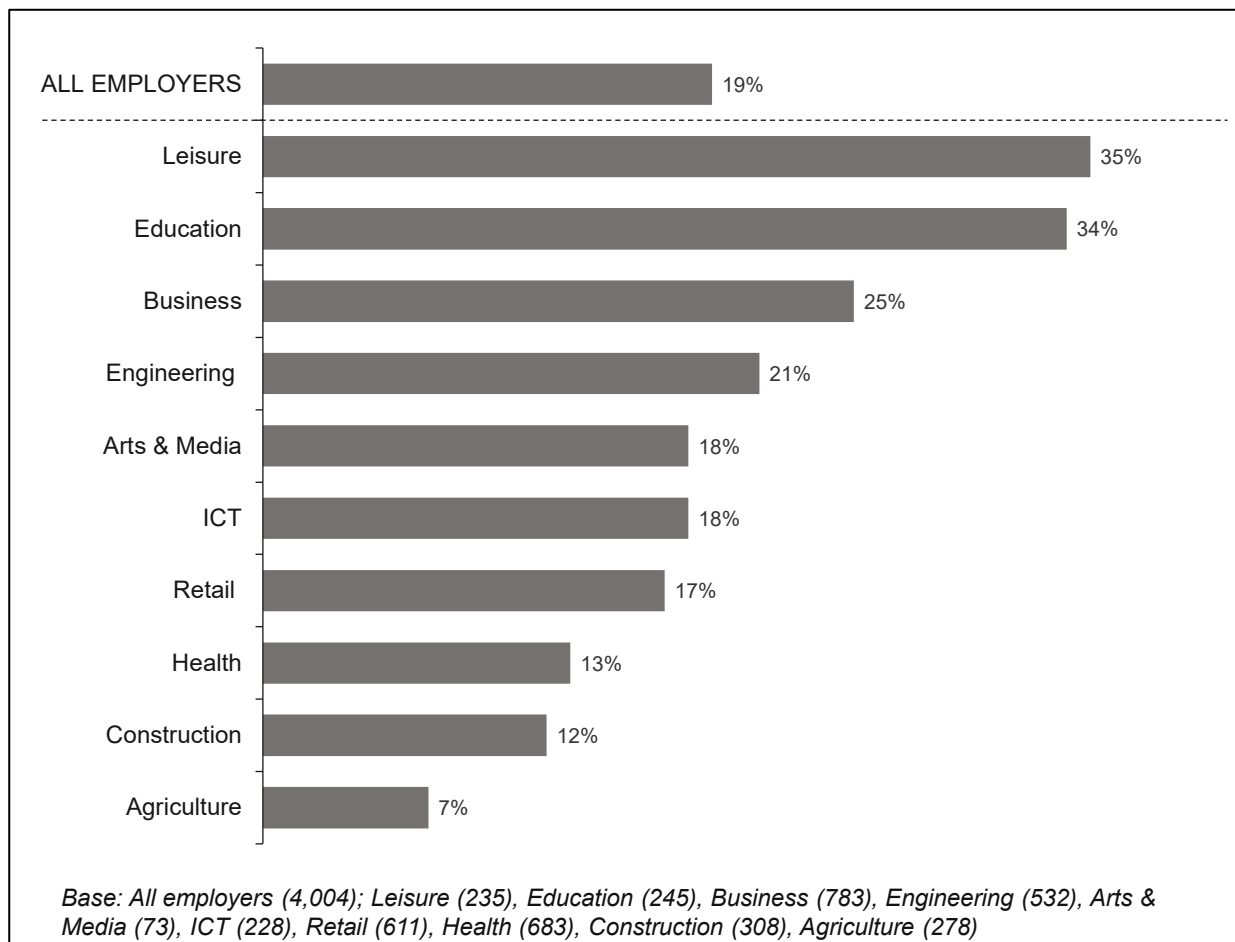
The new Levy payment, introduced in April 2017, requires all employers with a wage bill of over £3 million to pay an amount equivalent to 0.5% of their wage bill. It is expected that 2% of all employers will be required to make this payment.

The data from this survey shows that among employers already offering apprenticeships 19% of sites are part of organisations which will be eligible for this Levy payment¹¹ (though note 14% were unsure if their organisation's UK-wide wage bill exceeded £3m).

¹¹ Employers were asked "Does your organisation have a payroll wage bill of over £3m, across the UK?", with the options of "Yes", "No" and "Don't know". It is worth noting that 14% of employers in the survey did not know whether their wage bill was in excess of £3million, so the true number could be higher.

Employers offering apprenticeships in Leisure (35%) and Education (34%) were most likely to be eligible for the new Levy payment. This contrasts to those offering apprenticeships in Agriculture, where just 7% of employers will be eligible for the Levy. Figure 9.1 shows the variation by subject area.

Figure 9.1 Eligibility for Levy payment by subject area



Public sector employers were more likely to be eligible (38%) than private sector (15%), reflecting the fact that public sector organisations tend to be larger than those in the private sector.

Awareness of funding reforms

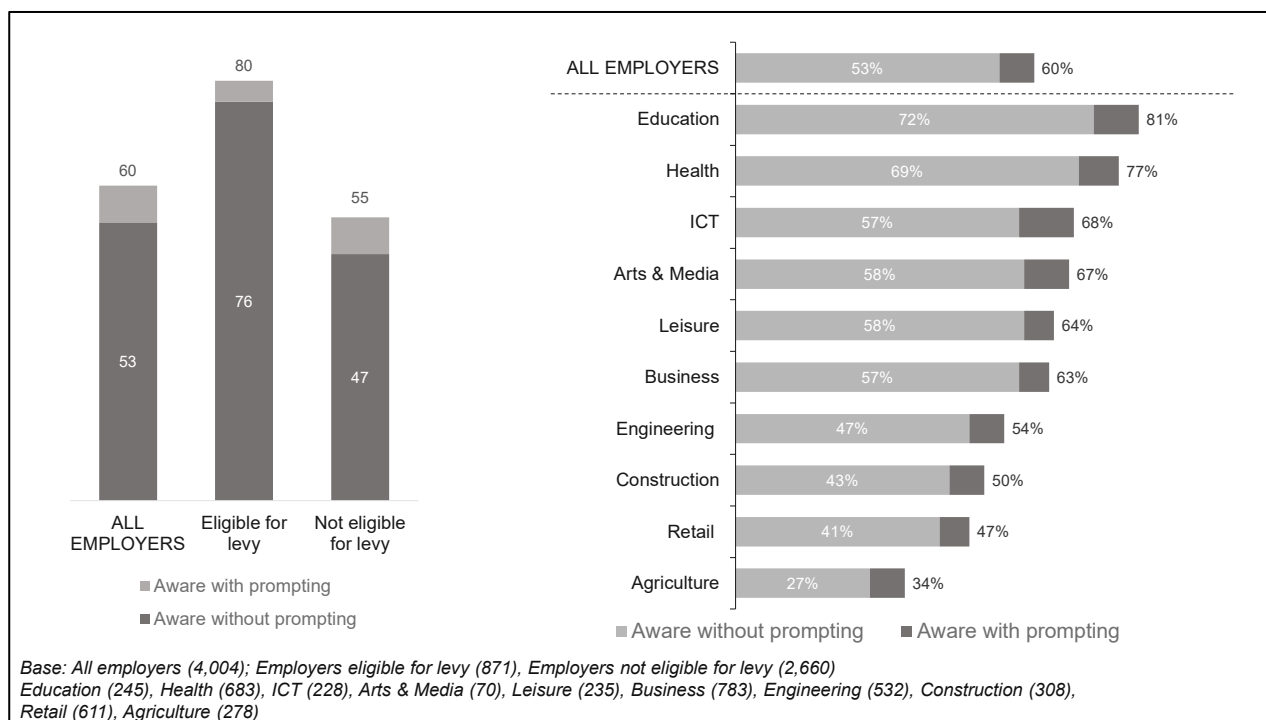
All employers were asked whether they were aware that the way apprenticeships are funded in England is changing. Just over half (53%) initially said they were aware; after the changes were described¹² a further 7% said they had heard about them totalling 60%

¹² "For employers with a wage bill of over £3m, the government is introducing an apprenticeship Levy of 0.5% of their wage bill, which they will be able to claim back to fund apprenticeship training.

of employers. This leaves 40% who were not aware of the imminent changes to the way apprenticeships are funded.

Employers stating that they were eligible for the Levy payments were far more likely to be aware of changes to apprenticeship funding (80%) than those not eligible (55%). Figure 9.2 also shows the considerable variation in awareness by the main subject area offered.

Figure 9.2 Awareness of funding changes by eligibility for Levy and subject area



Public sector (77%) and third sector employers (74%) were more likely to be aware of the upcoming changes when prompted than employers in the private sector (56%).

In terms of specific details about the funding changes, employers were most aware of the introduction of the Levy, with approaching half of all employers aware this was coming into force (45%). Of those eligible to pay the Levy, this figure was far higher at 71% but that still leaves 29% of Levy-eligible employers *who were involved in apprenticeships* unaware of the payment they were about to be required to make. This figure was higher among employers eligible for the Levy where the Head Office of the organisation was involved in decisions on apprenticeships (41%), suggesting in these organisations the information had not been shared, or was not relevant to the site being interviewed.

For non-Levy payers wanting to train apprentices, and for Levy payers wanting to invest more in apprenticeship training than they hold in their apprenticeship account, employers will need to make a 10% contribution toward the cost of an apprenticeship."

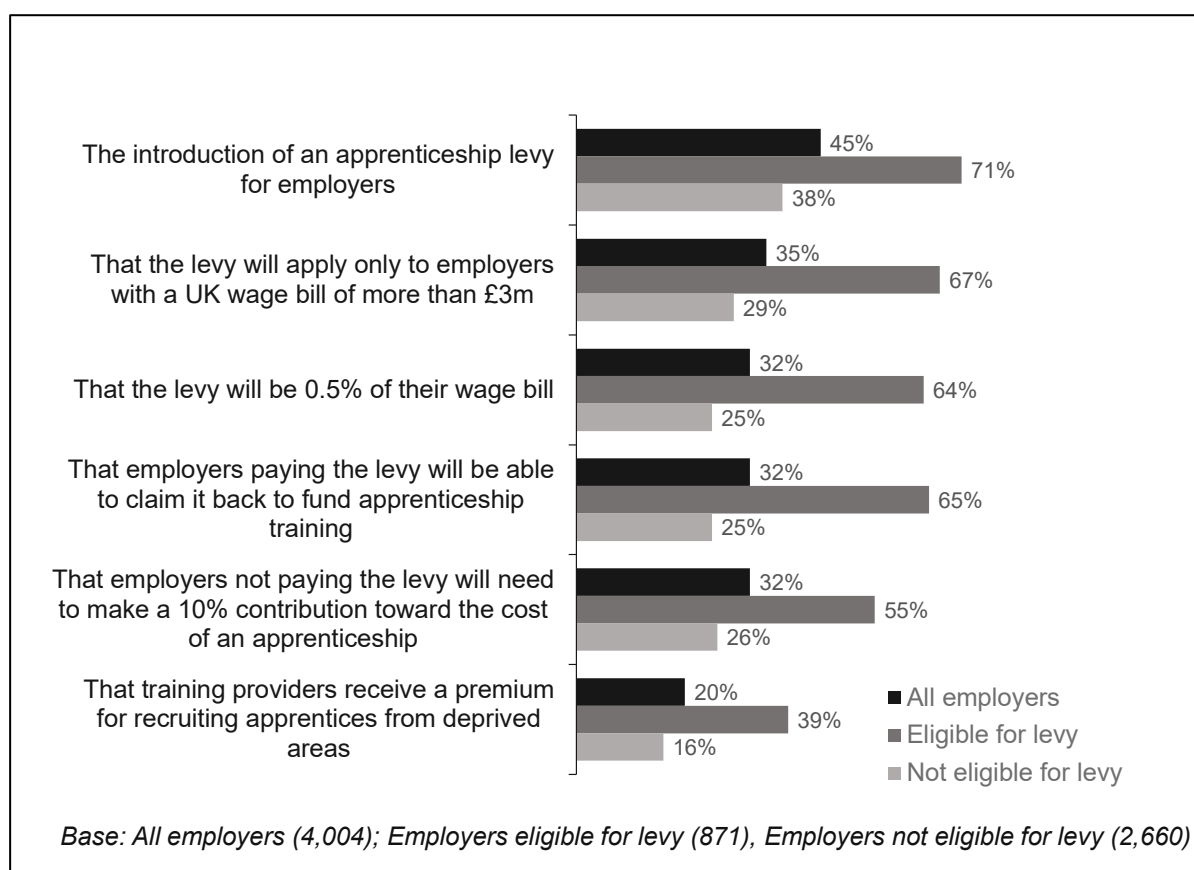
However, even among employers who took apprenticeship-related decisions on-site, a quarter (24%) were not aware.

Awareness of specifics about the Levy payment (as shown in Figure 9.3) were generally known by around a third of all employers, which increased to two-thirds among employers eligible to make the payment. There was low awareness overall however of the premium received by training providers for recruiting apprentices from deprived areas (20%).

Only a quarter of employers not eligible to make Levy payments were aware that they would become responsible for 10% of the cost of their apprenticeships under the new system.

Figure 9.3 shows awareness of specific elements of the funding changes among all employers, and then those in scope and not in scope of the Levy.

Figure 9.3 Awareness of specifics of funding changes, by eligibility for Levy payments



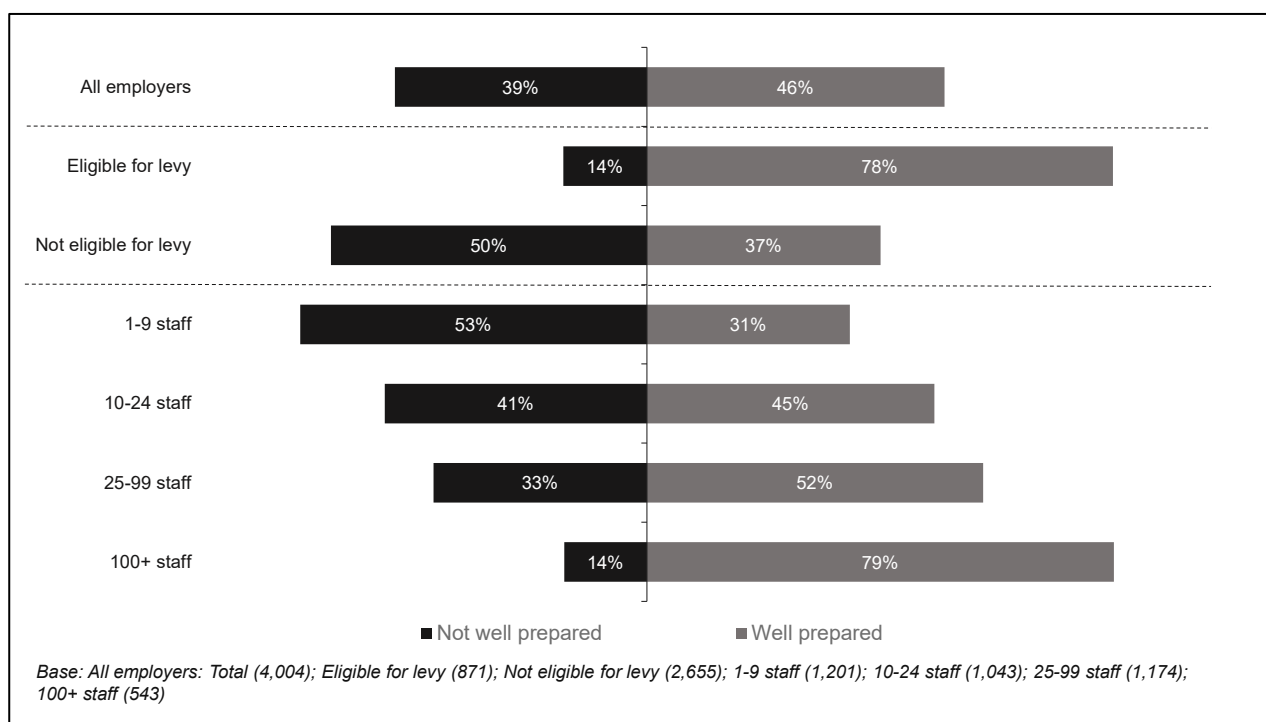
Preparedness for funding reforms

Overall just under half of employers (46%) felt prepared for the introduction of the funding changes. A further 7% said they did not foresee any impact or reason to prepare, leaving 39% who felt not particularly or not at all prepared for the changes.

Employers who were aware of the changes were unsurprisingly more likely to say they felt prepared (62%) but even among this group 29% felt poorly prepared for the reforms.

As shown in Figure 9.4, larger employers were better prepared than smaller employers; 79% of those with 100 or more staff felt prepared compared to just 31% of those with fewer than 10 staff. It is clear that some smaller employers will need support to understand the impact of the changes as 12% of employers with fewer than 10 staff said they did not foresee any changes for their business as a result of the reforms.

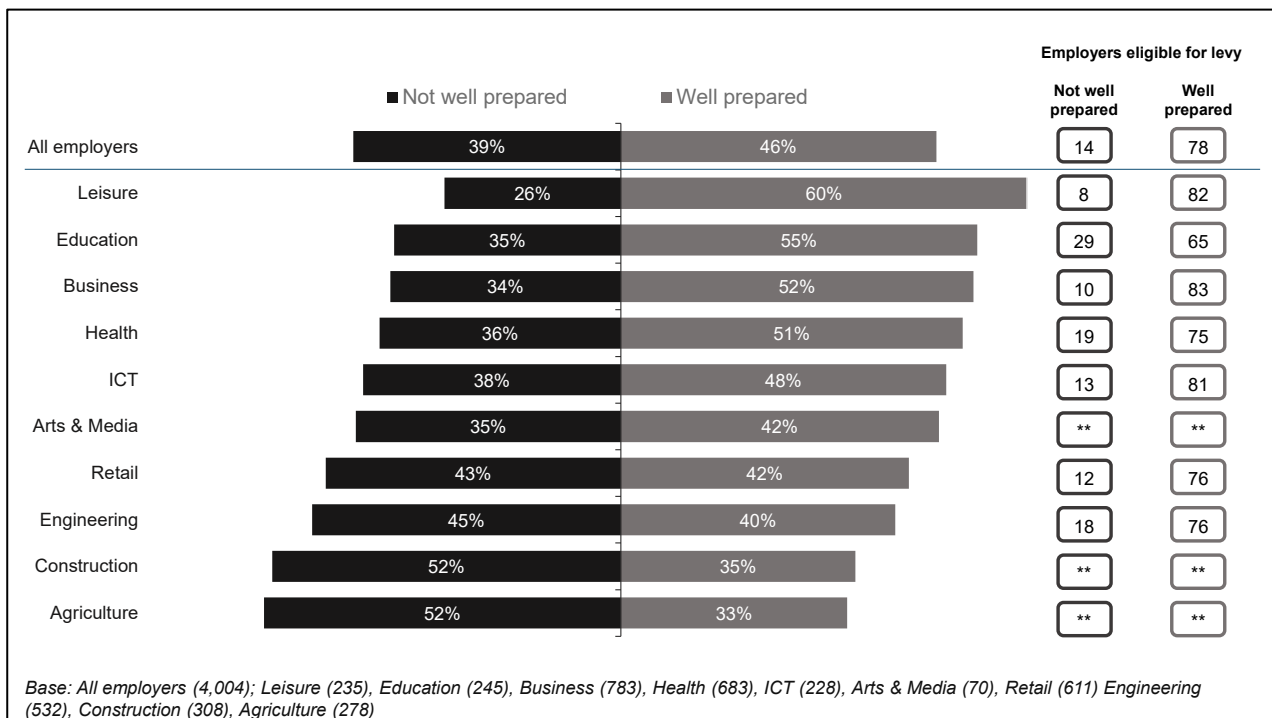
Figure 9.4 Preparedness for funding reform



There was also variation by the main subject area of the apprenticeships the employer offered. Employers offering apprenticeships in Agriculture and Construction were least likely to feel well prepared for the forthcoming changes, with only a third saying they were well prepared and over half ill-prepared. These industries are dominated by smaller employers, who we have already seen are less likely to feel prepared for the changes. In comparison, employers offering Leisure apprenticeships were far more likely to feel prepared (60%). Among potential Levy payers, however, it was employers offering Education related apprenticeships who were most likely to feel poorly prepared (29%, compared to 14% of all Levy payers). Levy payers offering apprenticeships in Health and

Engineering were also more likely than average to feel ill-prepared. Figure 9.5 shows the full breakdown by subject area, both overall (in the bar chart) and for employers eligible for the Levy (in the boxes to the right).

Figure 9.5 Preparedness for funding reform by main subject area



Of those who did not feel well prepared, the most common reasons were that they were unaware of the upcoming changes (38%) and that they needed to look into it more closely (14%). One-in-nine (11%) said they were not planning on recruiting any new apprentices for now, but they would need to look into it in more detail if and when it became relevant.

Employers offering apprenticeships in Agriculture, Retail and Engineering (which were among the most likely to say they did not feel well prepared) were more likely than average to say that their lack of awareness of the funding reforms explained their feeling poorly prepared. This suggests that more needs to be done to communicate the implications among sectors offering these apprenticeships. Although employers offering apprenticeships in Education and Health generally felt well prepared, they were more likely than average to say they were concerned by the lack of information they were getting and about the cost implications of the reforms. Table 9.1 shows the reasons why employers did not feel well prepared by sector.

Table 9.1 Reasons employers did not feel well prepared for funding reforms by subject area

	All employers	Agriculture	Arts and Media	Business	Construction	Education	Engineering	Health	ICT	Leisure	Retail
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: employers not particularly or not at all prepared</i>	1,546	148	26	261	157	83	224	230	87	62	255
Was not aware of funding reforms	38	47	**	38	39	29	43	24	39	35	46
Need to look into it further	14	9	**	11	13	13	13	24	11	16	10
Not planning to recruit, will look into it when we need to	11	14	**	12	8	11	12	8	10	8	11
Lack of information / poorly advertised	8	5	**	7	6	13	5	13	4	9	8
Not relevant to us, won't affect us	6	10	**	7	7	4	6	5	12	3	5
Won't affect us we are too small	6	10	**	7	7	4	6	5	12	3	5
Not aware of cost implications	5	5	**	6	6	10	2	7	3	0	5
Costs too high	4	4	**	2	1	5	1	8	1	13	4

**Base too small to report

Employers were asked which of four potential actions they had already taken to prepare their organisation for the funding changes. A third of all employers (33%) had worked out the likely impact on their business, and the same proportion had worked out broadly what they would do in response. A fifth (21%) had made a detailed plan of how they would respond, and/or had started making the changes already (22%).

Employers offering Leisure and Education apprenticeships were the most likely to have made plans and taken any action already; this ties in with the finding above that these employers were most likely to feel well prepared. Conversely, employers offering Agriculture apprenticeships, who were least likely to feel well prepared, were also least likely to have made plans or taken any action to prepare for the changes (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2 Actions taken to prepare business for funding reform by subject area

	All employers	Agriculture	Arts and Media	Business	Construction	Education	Engineering	Health	ICT	Leisure	Retail
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All employers</i>	4,004	278	70	783	308	245	532	683	228	235	611
Worked out the likely impact	33	16	36	39	25	51	30	35	36	47	25
Worked out broadly what actions to take	33	19	38	39	23	52	31	37	36	47	25
Made a detailed plan	21	10	22	24	12	25	18	24	20	34	18
Started to take action already	22	10	19	26	12	29	19	25	18	34	17

Predicted impact of funding reforms

Over a third of employers who were aware of the funding reforms (36%) predicted an impact on the number of apprentices they train. A fifth (19%) said they expected the number of apprentices they train to increase, compared with 15% expecting a decrease and 2% expecting to stop offering apprenticeships altogether. These figures were consistent when employers were asked about the impact on the different levels of apprenticeship offered (see Table 9.3).

Table 9.3 Predicted impact of funding reforms by level of apprenticeship offered (row percentages)

Type of apprentice	Increase (%)	No change/Do not offer anyway (%)	Decrease (%)	Stop altogether (%)
All	19	53	15	2
Level 2	17	51	13	2
Level 3	17	51	14	2
Level 4	16	51	14	2
Level 5	16	51	14	3
Levels 6 and 7	16	51	14	3

Base: All employers aware of upcoming funding changes (2,448). Row percentages do not add up to 100% as "don't know" responses, and those previously stating they would stop provision anyway are not shown.

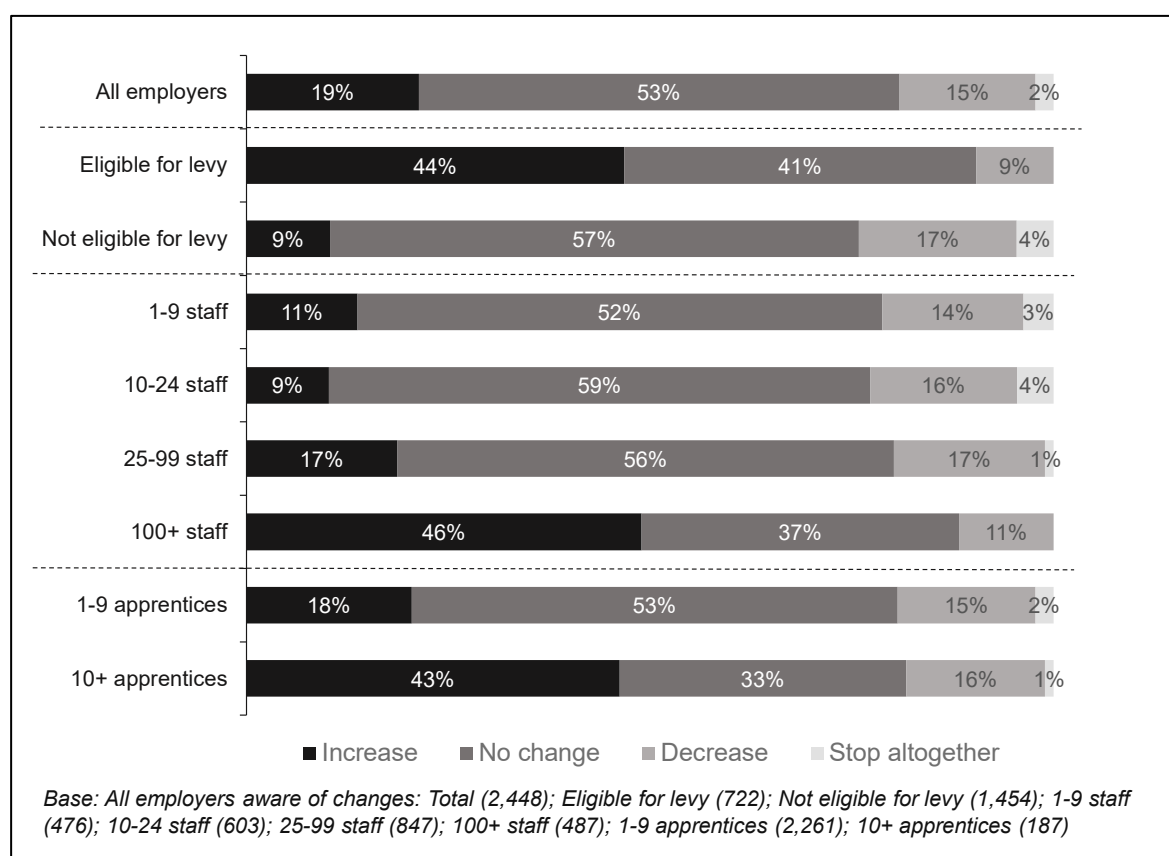
Looking at the figures in Table 9.3, it might at first appear that the net impact of funding changes on the provision of apprenticeships might be fairly neutral, given that the proportion of employers expecting to increase numbers is similar to the proportion planning to decrease or stop offering apprenticeships altogether.

However, if we look at the profile of each group we see that the impact on apprentice *numbers* has the potential to be a large one. Of those aware of the reforms and eligible to pay the Levy, 44% expected to increase the number of apprentices they trained as a direct result of the funding changes. These employers are at the larger end of the scale and tend to take on higher numbers of apprentices, so the impact should be positive on overall apprentice numbers. Furthermore, employers who train more apprentices were more likely to be planning to increase their numbers: 43% of employers who had 10 or more apprentices complete in the survey window expected to increase their provision as a result of the reforms (regardless of whether they were eligible for the Levy), compared with 18% of those training fewer apprentices.

However, as we have seen previously, employers eligible to pay the Levy are far more likely to be aware of funding reforms than those who are not. This means they are over-represented in the group of employers aware of the funding reform who were asked questions about the impact of this reform on their future plans for apprenticeship numbers. Reweighting the figures for these questions so they are representative by Levy/non-Levy payers suggests the true proportion looking to increase apprenticeships will be closer to 17% overall – slightly lower than the survey estimate.

The reforms may be less successful at opening up apprenticeships to smaller employers and indeed may threaten existing provision. Around a sixth (17%) of employers aware of the changes but not eligible to pay the Levy (i.e. employers who will now be required to “co-invest” to the value of 10% of the required funding for each apprentice) said they were likely to decrease the number of apprentices they had and 4% said they would stop offering apprenticeships altogether. This compares to 9% who they were likely to increase numbers. Similarly, smaller employers were more likely to be planning to decrease or stop providing apprenticeships altogether than they were to increase numbers, although for most the changes will have no impact on their numbers. Figure 9.6 shows the different impacts by eligibility for the Levy and size of employer.

Figure 9.6 Impact of funding reform on apprenticeship numbers by Levy eligibility, size and number of recent completers



It is worth noting that the 15% of employers who said they would decrease apprenticeship numbers as a result of the funding reforms is higher than the proportion of all employers who said they planned on reducing their apprentice numbers in future, before the funding reforms were discussed (6%)¹³. This suggests that as more employers become aware of the funding reforms and the requirement for co-investment they may also decide to reduce their numbers, rather than retain or increase them as they previously stated.

The impact of these changes was reasonably consistent across the types of apprentice the employers trained, be it new recruits, existing staff, managers or delivering apprenticeships in non-core subject areas. In each case, more employers said they were likely to increase numbers than said they were likely to decrease or stop offering altogether. Encouragingly this amounts to approaching a fifth of employers aware of the changes saying they are likely to increase both the number of existing staff they put through apprenticeship schemes (17%) and the number of people they take on specifically as apprentices (18%), compared to just 13% and 14% respectively saying

¹³ Those who stated previously that they did not plan to continue offering apprenticeships are excluded from this part of the analysis.

they expect numbers to decrease or to stop offering to these individuals. The impact on the number of managers doing apprenticeships or apprentices in non-core roles is a little less marked, but still slightly more expected to increase than decrease numbers.

There is a lot of variation, however, by whether the employer will be eligible to pay the Levy or not. Employers eligible for the Levy were far more likely to expect to increase than decrease their numbers across the board, which demonstrates the positive impact this reform can potentially have on apprenticeship numbers. This was particularly the case for apprenticeships offered to existing staff (more on this below). Non-Levy paying employers, however, were more likely to plan to decrease than increase their apprenticeships in every category (although it should be borne in mind that over a quarter of employers do not know how much they are paying for their current apprenticeships). Table 9.4 shows the expected impact on each type of apprentice by Levy payment status.

Table 9.4 Predicted impact of funding reforms on apprentice numbers by type and Levy payment status (row percentages)

Type of apprentice	Increase (%)	No change (%)	Decrease (%)	Stop altogether (%)	Do not offer anyway (%)
All	19	53	15	2	<1
Existing staff	17	51	10	3	4
Specifically recruited	18	52	11	3	2
Managers	14	44	7	4	17
Non-core roles	12	43	6	4	20
Levy payers					
All	44	41	9	<1	<1
Existing staff	43	38	7	<1	4
Specifically recruited	37	46	7	1	1
Managers	35	38	5	1	11
Non-core roles	31	39	5	1	13
Non-Levy payers					
All	9	58	17	4	<1
Existing staff	8	57	11	4	5
Specifically recruited	10	55	13	4	2
Managers	6	46	8	5	20
Non-core roles	6	45	7	5	22

Base: Employers aware of funding reforms (All: 2,448; Levy payers: 722; Non-Levy payers 1,429). Figures do not sum to 100% as "Don't know" responses are not shown.

The impact of the funding reforms on non-apprenticeship training was predicted to be relatively limited, with two-thirds (66%) saying there would be no impact at all on their non-apprenticeship training. A sixth (16%) predicted an increase and one-in-eleven (9%) said they would reduce non-apprenticeship training or stop providing it altogether as a result of the reforms. It does not follow, however, that employers planning to decrease or stop offering apprenticeships will therefore increase non-apprenticeship training – only 8% of employers decreasing or stopping their apprenticeship offering planned to increase non-apprenticeship training as a result. This is a concern for the remaining employers in this group, whose staff will likely receive less training as a result of the reforms.

There were differences in future plans for non-apprenticeship training between Levy and non-Levy paying employers. Employers eligible to pay the Levy were almost twice as likely as those not eligible to say they expected to decrease or stop their non-apprenticeship training (14%, compared to 8% of non-Levy payers). We saw above that the most likely impact of the funding reforms on Levy-payers' apprenticeship numbers would be an increase in existing staff being put onto apprenticeship programmes; this suggests that they are planning on substituting a portion of the training they already deliver for apprenticeship training, rather than necessarily increasing the overall amount of training staff are offered. The numbers here are not large, but it is an issue to keep an eye on in future evaluations as it could be that the training budget of these employers is being redirected to what is potentially less appropriate training for their staff (as they would presumably be offering these existing staff apprenticeships already if that was the most appropriate course of action for them). The potential for this impact was identified in Gambin et al (2016)¹⁴, where the researchers noted employers would do what was required to minimise the impact of the Levy on their bottom line. They called this “qualitative additionality” and described it as being “where unaccredited training – sometimes allied to management and leadership training - falls under the ambit of apprenticeships in the future as firms look at different ways of ensuring they fully reclaim their Levy payment”. It will be important to measure the extent to which this translates to actual behaviour in the coming years, and the impact this has on the employers' ability to meet their staff training and development needs.

¹⁴ Gambin et al (2016) “The apprenticeship Levy: how will employers respond?” DfE https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562445/The_apprenticeship_levy_how_will_employers_respond.pdf

Chapter 10 Conclusions

The government is committed to achieving 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020¹⁵, placing the onus both on employers not currently offering apprenticeships to recruit and train through this mechanism, but also for those already engaged to expand their current apprenticeship offering. In conjunction with expanding the programme, new employer-led standards are being designed to ensure the quality and relevance of training is maintained and improved. Along with changes to the funding mechanisms (such as the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy) this survey arrives at an apposite time for gauging employers' reactions to the changes and assessing their current and future apprenticeship offer.

As in 2015, the survey identified that apprentices made up a much higher proportion of the total workforce¹⁶ among mid-sized sites (with 10-99 employees) than among sites with 100 or more staff. With the Levy particularly targeted at trying to encourage larger companies to take on more apprentices, this gap should close in the next few years. And there are pockets of the employer landscape where there is clear capacity for a greater number of apprentices. For example, in London the average number of apprentices per 1,000 staff is only 3, compared to an average of 9 across England.

Similarly, organisations in the private sector tend to have a lower proportion of staff on apprenticeships than those in the public sector. There is also a clear opportunity for businesses to consider a more diverse apprenticeship offer. Nine in ten employers offering apprenticeships had individuals complete an apprenticeship within the survey window in only one broad subject area.

The survey suggests that the size of the apprenticeship offering will continue to increase over the next few years, but at a modest rate: 84% of employers plan to continue offering apprenticeships, with a third of these expecting to take on more apprentices, an increase on 2015. This will more than offset the 8% who plan to stop offering apprenticeships. While the Levy was only introduced in April 2017, over two in five large, eligible employers think this is likely to increase the number of apprentices they have (compared with one in ten expecting it to lead to a reduction). Smaller employers were far less likely to be aware of recent funding changes and, amongst those who were aware, were more likely to anticipate decreasing numbers or stopping offering altogether than plan to increase numbers.

Also of concern is that the 15% of employers who said they would decrease apprentice numbers as a result of the funding reforms is higher than the proportion of all employers

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-kick-starts-plans-to-reach-3-million-apprenticeships>

¹⁶ I.e. including workplaces that offered apprenticeships, as well as those that did not.

who said they planned on reducing their apprentice numbers in future, before the funding reforms were discussed (6%). This suggests that as more employers become aware of the funding reforms and the requirement for co-investment more may decide to reduce their numbers.

While apprentice numbers have increased, and are set to increase further, it is important that the quality of training remains high, and that employers recognise the benefits of apprenticeships. The vast majority of employers (84%) were satisfied with their apprenticeship, although this had dropped from 87% in 2015. Critically, levels of dissatisfaction were highest among those new to apprenticeships, with dissatisfaction levels higher among those employers than in previous evaluations in 2014 and 2015. Further, since 2014 the proportion of employers who have found the information, guidance and advice available about apprenticeship training sufficient has declined by five percentage points. It is important that efforts are focussed on improving the experience of those new to the programme to ensure they continue to invest in apprentices.

The Trailblazer programme has been used to try to drive through new employer-led standards. Awareness has grown over time, with 37% now aware of them, although take-up of the standards is still relatively low. Moreover, only 18% stated that they wanted more involvement in the design of apprenticeship training, so the government needs to consider ways to engage employers in the apprenticeship process, if the apprenticeship system is to become more employer-focused.

Finally, it is important to assess where apprenticeships sit from a professional development and progression perspective. In the past, there has been an accusation that some employers were using apprenticeships to accredit existing skills in the workforce, as opposed to ensuring new competencies were gained. This survey has however revealed a reduction in the proportion of employers who provide apprentices to existing staff. Employers have also bought into the concept of apprenticeships at higher levels, with a third of those engaged in apprenticeships offering higher or degree level apprenticeships. However, take-up of these apprenticeships is still relatively low, with more research required to explore barriers to involvement.

Technical Appendix

This appendix details how the survey was sampled, carried out, weighted and analysed, and how this compares to the previous surveys conducted in 2014 and 2015.

Introduction

The 2017 survey comprised 4,000 telephone interviews conducted between 2nd February and 5th April 2017, of employers that had apprentices complete their training between June 2015 and January 2016.

The survey targeted people in charge of training and development, and was carried out at an establishment (i.e. workplace) level. For employers with apprentices employed at multiple sites across the organisation between June 2015 and January 2016, more than one branch of the organisation could have been interviewed.

Sampling

Employers with apprentices completing their training between June 2015 and January 2016 were identified via first identifying their apprentices from the ILR (Individualised Learner Record), which records all apprenticeships which take place in England.

Company names and contact details were then matched on by BlueSheep, which sources information from the documentation employers submit to set up the apprenticeship and to return details of completion, as well as from its own databases. Based on previous experience of employer response rates in this context, an initial sample of 26,784 employers was drawn from this source for the fieldwork to send to BlueSheep, allowing for a match rate of 89.5% on contact details, and a ratio of sample to completed interviews of 6:1.

In order to ensure statistically robust results could be reported at the analysis stage for each subject area of apprenticeship, significant oversampling of employers providing less widely used subject areas (such as Arts and Media) was needed. Oversampling was also needed to ensure analysis was possible by apprenticeship level, and for employers with larger apprenticeship programmes. The sample was therefore stratified, using a grid of level within main subject area, as shown in Table A1.1. This was constructed via a multi-stage process:

- 1) In the case of employers with apprenticeship programmes involving 10 or more apprentices, a census approach was taken. All those employers listed on the ILR in this category were included in the sample, where a match with BlueSheep contact data was available. Those employers with 6 to 9 apprentices were also oversampled

relative to their proportion in the employer population (1,083 were drawn of 2,106 available).

- 2) A minimum target was set for each cell in the grid, designed to achieve at least 100 interviews with each of level 2 only and level 3 only employers within each subject area, and 240 interviews for each subject area overall. We worked on the basis of a sample six times the desired number of interviews to be achieved. This was drawn at random within each cell where that number of employer records was available; otherwise all employer records were drawn.
- 3) The remainder of the sample, up to a total of approximately 26,800 records, was distributed in line with the proportion of employers in the sample through random selection, other than oversampling those with 6 to 9 apprentices as mentioned above.
- 4) The sample was sent to BlueSheep for matching. An 84% match rate was achieved, down from 91% for the 2015 survey.

Table A.1 shows the resulting distribution of contactable sample:

Table A1.1: Sample profile

Subject area	Level classification					
	Level 2 only*	Level 3 only*	Level 2 and Level 3*	Level 4+ only	Total	
Agriculture	935	581	106	22	1,644	7%
Arts and Media	87	173	18	5	283	1%
Business	2,699	1,050	485	76	4,310	19%
Construction	1,015	478	219	12	1,724	8%
Education	471	588	190	0	1,249	6%
Engineering	1,898	876	257	12	3,043	14%
Health	1,846	1,035	799	84	3,764	17%
ICT	497	654	133	71	1,355	6%
Leisure	703	576	290	0	1,569	7%
Retail	2,124	963	352	20	3,459	15%
Science	7	47	13	3	70	0%
Total	12,282	7,021	2,862	305	22,470	100%
	55%	31%	13%	1%	100%	

**Including those with these levels and some level 4+ apprentices*

Fieldwork

The survey achieved an overall response rate of 45%. Table A1.2 breaks down the sample outcomes and response rate for the survey.

Response rate was calculated as the number of achieved interviews as a proportion of 'total complete contacts', where a final outcome was reached with the establishment (this includes those respondents who completed the interview, refused to take part or quit during the interview). Interviews lasted approximately 23 minutes on average.

Table A1.2: Sample outcomes and response rate.

Sample outcome			
	Number of contacts	% of all sample	% of complete contacts
Records sent to BlueSheep	26,784		
Total starting sample (records received from BlueSheep with contact details)	22,470	100%	
Ineligible sample (no recollection of anyone completing training between June 2015 and January 2016)	831	4%	
Live sample at end of fieldwork period	6,371	28%	
Withdrawn sample (out of quota or maximum number of tries)	3,050	14%	
Unobtainable / invalid numbers, or company closed	3,334	15%	
Total complete contacts	8,884	40%	100%
Achieved interviews	4,004	18%	45%
Refusal	3,127	14%	35%
Quits during interview	594	3%	7%
Dealt with at Head Office or another site, and unwilling to transfer	1,159	5%	13%

Weighting

Because the fieldwork over and under sampled specific groups of employers, as outlined above, weighting was required to ensure the results correctly represented these groups. The dataset was therefore weighted to the profile of employers with apprentices shown on the ILR. As in 2015, this was done using an interlocking subject area by level basis, overlaid with a rim weight based on the number of apprentices completing in the survey window.

The data was also grossed up to allow the production of figures reflecting the total number of employers with apprentices in the survey window in England (88,252, determined from the ILR). This resulted in the final weighted profile shown in the right-hand column of Table A1.2.

Table A1.1: Sample profile, interviews achieved, and weighted dataset profile

Base	Usable sample drawn		Achieved interviews		Weighted data (grossed up)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture	1,644	7%	278	7%	2,389	3%
Arts and Media	283	1%	70	2%	383	*%
Business	4,310	19%	783	20%	22,617	26%
Construction	1,724	8%	308	8%	4,837	5%
Education	1,249	6%	245	6%	1,530	2%
Engineering	3,043	14%	532	13%	14,155	16%
Health	3,764	17%	683	17%	19,626	22%
ICT	1,355	6%	228	6%	2,530	3%
Leisure	1,569	7%	235	6%	2,219	3%
Retail	3,459	15%	611	15%	17,607	20%
Science	70	*%	20	*%	89	*%
Level 2 and no level 3*	12,282	55%	2,011	50%	45,935	52%
Level 3 and no level 2*	7,021	31%	1,313	33%	29,611	34%
Level 2 and level 3*	2,862	13%	614	15%	11,439	13%
Level 4+ only	305	1%	66	2%	1,266	1%
1 apprentice	14,945	67%	2,600	65%	60,586	69%
2 apprentices	3,314	15%	626	16%	14,265	16%
3 to 5 apprentices	1,989	9%	393	10%	9,490	11%
6 to 9 apprentices	906	4%	174	4%	2,188	2%
10 or more apprentices	1,316	6%	211	5%	1,722	2%
Total	22,470	100%	4,004	100%	88,252	100%

Explaining variation between sub-groups in this report

It is important to note that where differences are noted between sub-groups in this report, it is always possible that these variations could be explained (in part or in full) by differences in the composition of those sub-groups. These should be taken into account when interpreting results.

To take into account *all* relevant factors extending beyond company size to sector of operation and apprenticeship scheme size, would require more advanced statistical analysis.

To assist in interpretation, we present some key relationships between different variables used for analysis in this report in the charts below. Levels of apprenticeship provided by main subject area is shown in Figure 4.5 earlier in the report, and so is not replicated here.

Figure A1.1: Profile of employers: Site size by subject area

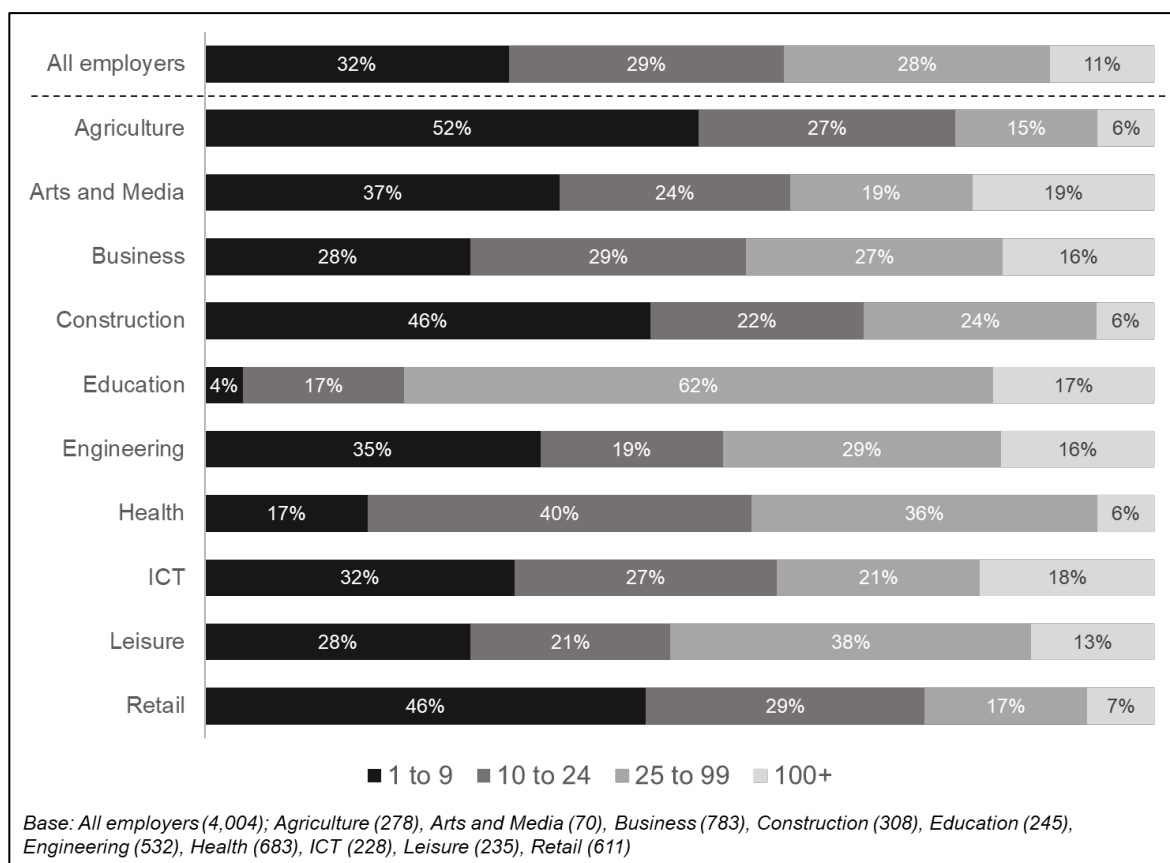


Figure A1.2: Profile of employers: Organisation size by subject area

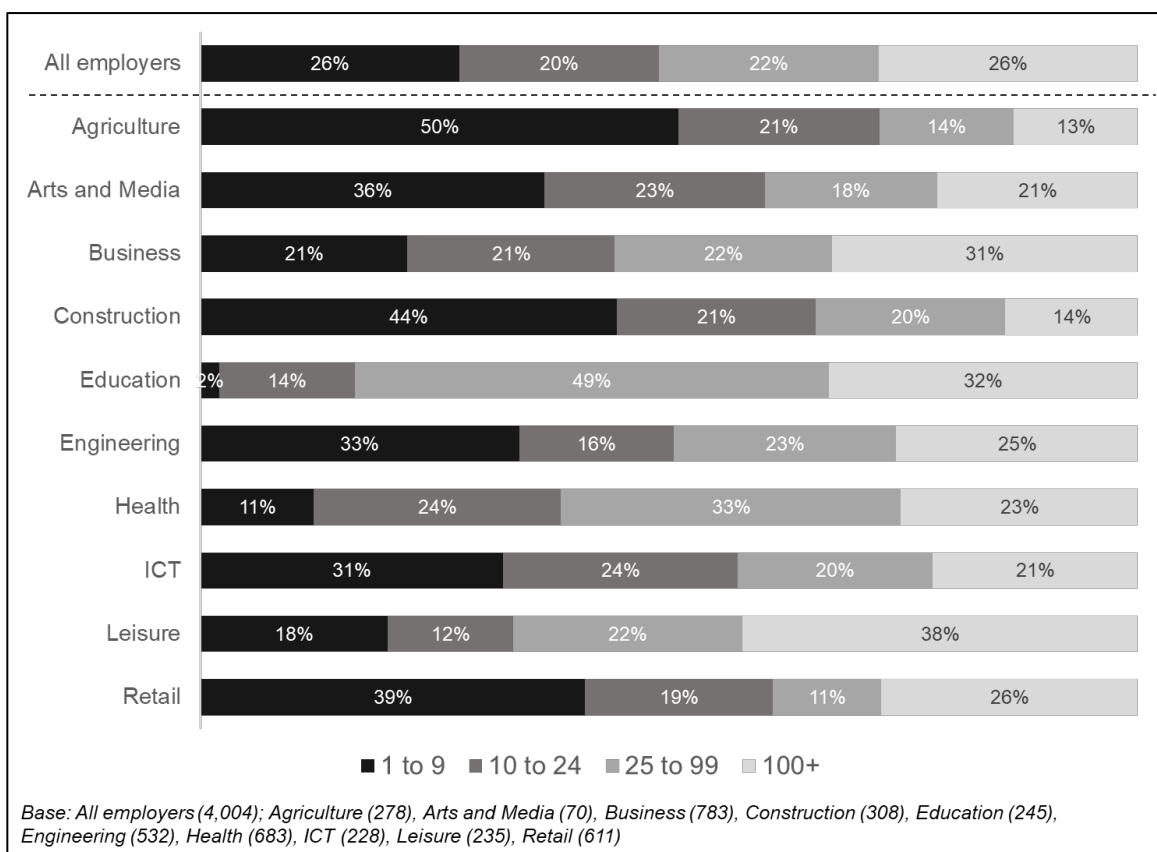
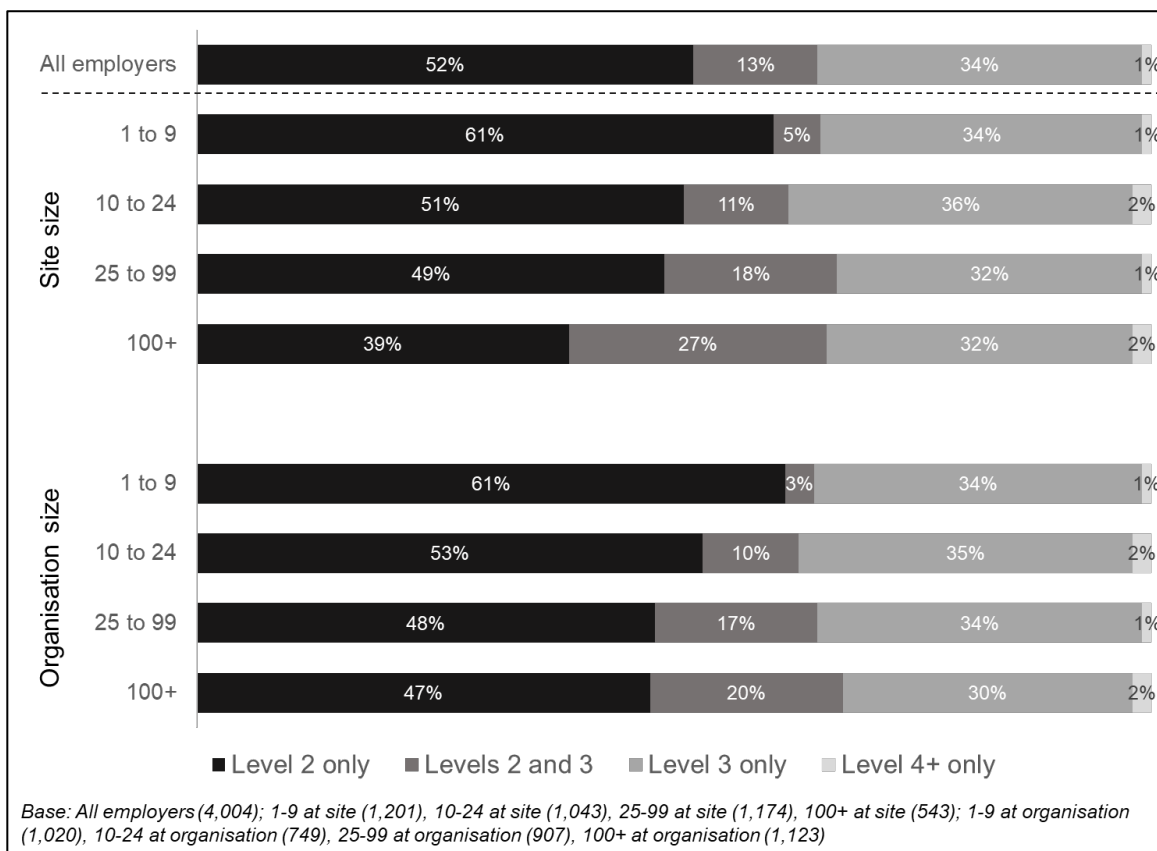


Figure A1.3: Profile of employers: Levels offered by site and organisation size



Significance Testing

Since the employer data used in this report is derived from a sample survey, it is therefore subject to statistical error. Figures in the report therefore have an error margin; these are shown in Table A1.2 for the overall sample (based on 4,004 interviews) and for two hypothetical sub-groups (based on sample sizes of 750 and 100). The error margin varies depending on the survey results, as shown.

To give a worked example, if the survey suggests that 50% of all employers hold a certain opinion, the standard error at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 1.5\%$ per cent. We can therefore say we are 95% certain that the proportion of employers holding that opinion is between 48.5% and 51.5%.

Throughout the report, differences between sub-groups and between 2015 and 2017 survey results have only been commented on if the differences are statistically significant.

Table A1.2: Significance testing: error margins

Figure used in report	95% confidence margin		
	All employers (sample size: 4,004)	Large sub-group (sample size: 750)	Small sub-group (sample size: 100)
5%	$\pm 0.7\%$	$\pm 1.6\%$	$\pm 4.3\%$
10%	$\pm 0.9\%$	$\pm 2.1\%$	$\pm 5.9\%$
20%	$\pm 1.2\%$	$\pm 2.9\%$	$\pm 7.8\%$
30%	$\pm 1.4\%$	$\pm 3.3\%$	$\pm 9.0\%$
40%	$\pm 1.5\%$	$\pm 3.5\%$	$\pm 9.6\%$
50%	$\pm 1.5\%$	$\pm 3.6\%$	$\pm 9.8\%$
60%	$\pm 1.5\%$	$\pm 3.5\%$	$\pm 9.6\%$
70%	$\pm 1.4\%$	$\pm 3.3\%$	$\pm 9.0\%$
80%	$\pm 1.2\%$	$\pm 2.9\%$	$\pm 7.8\%$
90%	$\pm 0.9\%$	$\pm 2.1\%$	$\pm 5.9\%$
95%	$\pm 0.7\%$	$\pm 1.6\%$	$\pm 4.3\%$

Differences in methodology from 2015 to 2017

In addition to the questionnaire changes, the research method for the 2017 evaluation differed from that used in 2015 in a number of minor ways, none of which should substantially affect the overall comparability of the data:

- Due to the introduction of Science and Mathematics apprenticeships, this framework was included in classifications for the first time, and sampled and weighted separately. These were introduced in 2011, but are quite long apprenticeships and have taken time to build up numbers of apprenticeship completers.
- Apprenticeship Standards were introduced in August 2014; these have not affected the employer sampling process since no apprentices on these standards had reached the point of completing their apprenticeship during the survey window (June 2015 to January 2016). However, questionnaire and report terminology has been changed to accommodate these, moving from referring to 'broad frameworks' to 'subject areas'.
- Employers with higher and degree apprenticeships only (at level 4 or higher) were included in the current research, unlike in previous years. These employers comprised a small proportion of employers with apprentice completers (2% of achieved interviews and just 1% of the weighted dataset).
- The screening process was reviewed and slightly improved relative to 2015, with employers given more background information about the apprenticeship during the screening process, and additional attention being given to ensuring the contact details supplied to us were for the correct site within a large organisation.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

S Screener

ASK TELEPHONIST

S1 **IF NECESSARY: Good morning / afternoon. My name is <NAME> and I'm calling from IFF Research, on behalf of the Department for Education.**

[IF HASCON = 1: **Could I speak to <CONTACT>[IF HASJOB = 1, <JOBTITLE>]? IF NECESSARY: I'm told they are the person in charge of training**[IF HASLOCATION = 1: **at <COMPANY>'s site in or near <LOCATION>.**]

[IF HASCON = 2: **May I speak to the person in charge of training** [IF HRSITE = 1 AND S3 ≠ 3 AND HASLOCATION = 1: **at your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2 AND S3 ≠ 3: **at this site**][IF S3 = 3 OR HASLOCATION = 2: **at <COMPANY>?**]

IF NECESSARY: They might deal with training in areas such as <COMBINEDTITLES>, or more broadly in <BROADFRAMES>. The call is regarding some research we're carrying out for the Department for Education.

*INTERVIEWER: If a number of people deal with training for the named site, ask for the person who deals with the areas above, or failing that the most senior person in charge of training. **Do not take referrals to consultants or training providers.***

[IF HRSITE = 2 AND HASLOCATION = 1: If it seems you are talking to a head office / national switchboard, please ask for the <COMPANY> office / site at <LOCATION>.] [IF HRSITE = 1: For this piece of sample, we've been told <COMPANY> Head Office / HR office deals with training for <LOCATION>.]

Correct person speaking	1	CONTINUE TO S2
Transferred	2	
Hard appointment	3	TAKE DETAILS
Soft appointment	4	
IF HASCON = 1: Named person no longer works for the organisation / nobody at company with that name	5	SET HASCON = 2 RE-ASK S1
IF HASCON = 1: Named respondent isn't right person / is an external consultant	6	
Dealt with at head office site / a separate HR site – not willing to put through / give number	7	THANK AND CLOSE DS: SET HRSITE = 1. PUT IN 'SITE LOST' QUEUE
Dealt with at head office site / a separate HR site – willing to put through / give number	8	TAKE REFERRAL IN NOTES, REINTRODUCE AT S1. SET HRSITE = 1.

No-one available at the company who can talk about this, here or at Head Office / HR Office	9	THANK AND CLOSE
Refusal	10	
Refusal (company policy)	11	
Refusal (taken part in recent survey)	12	
Not available during fieldwork	13	
Company / site closed	14	
Residential number	15	
Wrong company / organisation	16	
Can only speak to consultant / training provider	17	THANK AND CLOSE DS: PUT IN 'CONSULTANT' QUEUE
Dead line / Fax	18	CLOSE
No Answer / Engaged / Answerphone	19	CALL BACK LATER
Need reassurances	20	SHOW REASSURANCES AND RETURN
Send reassurance email	21	SEND REASSURANCES AND RETURN

IF S1 = 1 OR 2 (TRANSFERRED / SPEAKING TO PERSON IN CHARGE OF TRAINING)
 S2 IF NECESSARY: **Good morning / afternoon, my name is <NAME>, calling from IFF Research, an independent research company.**

The Department for Education have asked us to find out what employers think about the quality of certain types of training in England.

We are contacting you because government records suggest that some of your employees[IF HASLOCATION = 1: at your site in <LOCATION>] have been on training in the last two years, which may include apprenticeship training. Are you the best person to talk to about this? The interview would take about 20 to 25 minutes.

IF NECESSARY: Our records suggest the training was in areas such as <COMBINEDTITLES>, or more generally in <BROADFRAMES>.

Yes	1	CONTINUE (TO S3)
Maybe / one of the best people to talk to / depends on the questions	2	
No, not the right person	3	THANK RESPONDENT SET HASCON = 2 GO BACK TO S1
Hard appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	5	
Refusal	6	THANK AND CLOSE
Refusal (company policy)	7	
Refusal (taken part in recent survey)	8	
Not available during fieldwork	9	
No Answer / Engaged / Answerphone	10	CALL BACK LATER
Need reassurances	11	SHOW REASSURANCES AND RETURN
Send reassurance email	12	SEND REASSURANCES AND RETURN

IF S1 = 1 OR 2 (TRANSFERRED / SPEAKING TO PERSON IN CHARGE OF TRAINING)

S3 **Can I just check, are you actually based at <COMPANY>[IF HASLOCATION = 1:, in or near <LOCATION>]?**

[IF HASLOCATION = 1: IF NO: **Would you be the right person to talk to about trainees based at <LOCATION>?**]

Yes	1	SET HRSITE = 2 CONTINUE
IF HASLOCATION = 1: No, but that site moved here	2	SET HRSITE = 2 CONTINUE
No, I'm an external consultant / training provider	3	THANK RESPONDENT SET HASCON = 2 RETURN TO S1
IF HASLOCATION = 1: No, but I work for <COMPANY> and deal with the training and development at <LOCATION>	4	SET HRSITE = 1 CONTINUE
IF HASLOCATION = 1: No, I wouldn't know about training and development at <LOCATION>	5	THANK RESPONDENT SET HRSITE = 2 SET HASCON = 2 RETURN TO S1
IF HASLOCATION = 2: No, I wouldn't know about training and development	6	SET HASCON = 2 RETURN TO S1

ASK ALL

S4 **According to our records,[IF TOTFIN = 1: at least one][IF TOTFIN >= 2: some] of your employees[IF HRSITE = 1 AND HASLOCATION = 1: at your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2 OR HASLOCATION = 2: at this site] successfully completed training between June 2015 and January 2016. [IF TOTFIN = 1: This may have been an apprenticeship.][IF TOTFIN >= 2: These may have been apprenticeships.]**

Is this correct?

IF NECESSARY: Our records suggest the training was in areas such as <COMBINEDTITLES>, or more generally in <BROADFRAMES>.

[IF HASDETAIL = 1: *IF NECESSARY: One of the more recent learners completed a course in <COMBINEDTITLEDDETAIL>, at level <COMBINEDLEVEL>, on <LEARNACTENDDATE>.*][IF HASMAINQUAL = 1: *The main qualification involved would have been <COMBINEDTITLEDDETAILMAIN>.*]. **It's possible they might have continued straight away to do a qualification at a higher level.]**

Yes, correct	1	CONTINUE (TO S6)
No, training not in these subjects / areas	2	ASK S5 (AREAS OF TRAINING)
No recollection of any training	3	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	4	
Need reassurances	5	SHOW REASSURANCES AND RETURN

ASK IF S4 = 2 (SUBJECT AREA OF TRAINING AT SITE NOT CORRECT)

S5 **Which of the following broad subject areas best fit the types of formal training carried out by employees** [IF HRSITE = 1 AND HASLOCATION = 1: **at your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2 OR HASLOCATION = 2: **at this site**] **between June 2015 and January 2016?**

IF A <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: We only want to include training provided to your own employees here.

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

DS: CONCATENATE RESPONSES AND WRITE TO BROADFRAMES. SET HASDETAIL = 2.

Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1
Arts, Media and Publishing	2
Business, Administration and Law	3
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	4
Education and Training	5
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	6
Health, Public Services and Care	7
Information and Communication Technology	8
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	9
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	10
Science and Mathematics	11
DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	12
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	13

DS: IF S5 = 12 OR 13, THANK AND CLOSE, USING SAME OUTCOME AS S4 = 3 OR 4.

S6 **This call may be recorded for quality and training purposes only.**

[IF HASLOCATION = 1: **Please remember that all the questions in this survey will be about trainees based at your <LOCATION> site, rather than training at your company as a whole.**]

DS: IF HASLOCATION = 2, SET HRSITE = 2 TO ENABLE CORRECT TEXT SUBS.

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

The interview will take around 20 to 25 minutes to complete.

This survey is being carried out for DfE (the Department for Education), and is designed to measure employer opinion and expected future usage of government-backed schemes for in-work training. It will help DfE to plan future provision, and to assess whether the existing provision is meeting the needs of employers across the economy.

DfE are interested in your opinion even if you have no employees in training now, and if you have no plans to train any in the immediate future.

All data will be reported in aggregate form and your answers will not be reported to our client in any way that would allow you to be identified, without your express permission.

We got your organisation's details from the ILR (Individualised Learner Record), which is the official national record of training courses for adult learners. It's likely that someone at your organisation, or a training provider, gave your contact details when asked to give details of the employer of a person doing work-based training which finished between June 2015 and January 2016.

[IF HASDETAIL = 1: IF NECESSARY: One of the more recent learners completed a course in <COMBINEDTITLEDETAIL>, on <LEARNACTENDDATE>. [IF HASMAINQUAL = 1: The core qualification involved would have been <COMBINEDTITLEDETAILMAIN>]. It's possible they might have continued straight away to do a qualification at a higher level.]

Your data will be held securely at IFF; we are ISO27001 accredited for information security, and comply fully with the Data Protection Act. We are members of the Market Research Society and regulated by their code of conduct. If you want to verify that IFF Research is a genuine market research company, you can call:

- **MRS:** Market Research Society on 0500 396999

If you'd like more information about this specific survey, or to get more information about its aims and objectives, you can call:

- **IFF**
- **DfE**

A Establishment / Organisation details

IF HASSECTOR = 1 (HAS SECTOR INFO)

A1 **According to our information the main business activity**[IF HRSITE = 1: **at your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **at this site**] **is <SICTXT>. Does this sound about right?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: WE ARE NOT AFTER AN EXACT MATCH. WE WANT A BROAD CLASSIFICATION OF THE INDUSTRY SECTOR THEY OPERATE IN.

Yes	1	ASK A3
No	2	ASK A2
Don't know	3	

IF A1 = 2 OR 3, OR HASSECTOR = 2 (NO SECTOR INFO OR SECTOR INFO WRONG)

A2 **What is the main business activity**[IF HRSITE = 1: **at your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **at this site**]?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY:

- **What is the main product or service of this establishment?**
- **What exactly is made or done at this establishment?**

WRITE IN

ASK ALL

A3 **Would you classify your organisation as...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Mainly seeking to make a profit	1
A charity, voluntary or co-operative organisation	2
Or a public sector organisation	3
DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above	4

ASK ALL

A4 **Is** [IF HRSITE = 1: **your** <LOCATION> **site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**]...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

The only site in the organisation	1
The Head Office of an organisation with a number of sites	2
Or a branch of an organisation with a number of sites	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

ASK ALL

A5 **Including you and any working proprietors, approximately how many people are on the payroll at** [IF HRSITE = 1: **your** <LOCATION> **site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**]?

Do not include outside contractors / agency staff nor the self-employed other than a self-employed owner, but do include both full-time and part-time staff, trainees and partners in a partnership.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 99999

ASK ALL

A5A [IF A5 NUMERIC: *INTERVIEWER CODE TO RANGE*]
[IF A5 = DK: **Is it approximately...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.]

DS: CHECK RANGE CONSISTENT WITH A5.

ASK IF MULTI-SITE ORGANISATION (A4 = 2 OR 3)

A6 **And approximately how many people are on the payroll across the whole organisation in the UK?**

Do not include outside contractors / agency staff nor the self-employed other than a self-employed owner, but do include both full-time and part-time staff, trainees and partners in a partnership.

DS: ALLOW A5 TO 999999

ASK ALL

A6A [IF A6 NUMERIC: *INTERVIEWER CODE TO RANGE*]

[IF A6 = DK: **Is it approximately...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.]

DS: CHECK RANGE CONSISTENT WITH A6. SHOW RANGES FROM A5A UPWARDS ONLY.

	A5	A6
TAKE NUMBER	_____	_____
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	1	1
	A5A	A6A
DO NOT READ OUT: 1 (sole trader)	1	1
2-4	2	2
5-9	3	3
10-24	4	4
25-49	5	5
50-99	6	6
100-199	7	7
200-249	8	8
250-499	9	9
500 or more	10	10
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / refused	11	11

ASK ALL PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES (A3=1)

- A7 **Which of the following statements best applies to your outlook for the business over the next 12 months? We expect the business to...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Grow significantly	1
Grow slightly	2
Remain about the same	3
Contract slightly	4
Contract significantly	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	7

B Involvement with Apprenticeships

ASK ALL

I'd like you to answer the following questions about training taking place at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site].

DS: START LOOP FOR EACH APPCOUNT_## >= 1. "##" INDICATES THE ITERATION NUMBER.

ASK ALL

B1 [IF APPCOUNT_## = 1: **Was the employee**][IF APPCOUNT_## > 1: **Were your employees**] **who did training in** [IF HASDETAIL = 1: <COMBINEDTITLES_#>][IF HASDETAIL = 2: <LABEL FOR BROADFRAMES = ##>] **on an Apprenticeship?**

[IF HASDETAIL = 1: *IF NECESSARY: More broadly in* <LABEL FOR BROADFRAMES = ##>]

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
IF APPCOUNT_## > 1: Some were	3
Don't know / not sure	4

DS: END LOOP

B2 DELETED

SHOW IF ANY B1 ITERATION = 2, 3 OR 4:

B2A **The training undertaken by your employees in** [IF HASDETAIL = 1: <COMBINEDTITLES>][IF HASDETAIL = 2: <BROADFRAMES>] **is recognised by the government as an apprenticeship. For the rest of the interview, I will refer to the training undertaken by this or these employees as an apprenticeship. I would like you to answer with this in mind.**

ASK ALL

- B3 **How long has**[IF HRSITE = 1: **your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**] **been offering formal Apprenticeships, by which I mean Apprenticeships which lead to a recognised qualification?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

For a year or less	1
For more than a year, up to 3 years	2
More than 3 years, up to 5 years	3
More than 5 years up to 10 years	4
More than 10 years	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

ASK THOSE NEW TO APPRENTICESHIPS (B3=1 OR 2)

- B3A **Why did**[IF HRSITE = 1: **your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**] **decide to start offering Apprenticeships?**

INTERVIEWER: *If they say "Head office decision" please probe: **Why do you think head office decided to do that?***

INTERVIEWER: *If they say "We needed to train someone / we needed to recruit someone / we needed them" please probe: **Why did you choose Apprenticeships?***

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE. PROBE.

Good way to recruit new staff	1
Good way to up-skill existing staff	2
A training provider approached us about it	3
Existing staff asked about it / wanted it	4
Availability of grants to support it	5
Head office decision	6
We could shape our own framework or standard	7
We wanted to help young people	8
To ensure young people continue to enter the company / industry / new blood / succession planning	9
Because of the forthcoming Apprenticeship Levy	10
Apprenticeship funding reform	11
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	12
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know	13

ASK ALL

B4 **Do or have you offered Apprenticeships to any of the following age groups?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

16-18 year olds	1
19-24 year olds	2
25 years or older	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

ASK IF DO NOT OFFER TO 16-18 YEAR OLDS (B4 ≠ 1)

B5 **What, if anything, would persuade you to offer Apprenticeships to young people aged 16-18?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Nothing - we cannot employ people aged 16-18 in our work	1
If a suitable 16-18 year old applicant applied	2
If there was an appropriate opening we would employ 16-18 year olds	3
If we received funding / financial assistance to pay their wages	4
If the training was better / more relevant	5
If there were changes to regulations / the law	6
If it was company policy / the Board decided to do it	7
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8
Nothing could persuade us DS: ALLOW SINGLE CODE ONLY	9
Don't know	10

ASK IF SITE IS A BRANCH (A4=3)

- B6 **How much say does [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] have on the number of Apprentices that it trains? Is...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: WE ARE INTERESTED IN HOW MUCH INPUT THE RESPONDENT HAS INTO THE NUMBER OF APPRENTICES THAT ARE RECRUITED, NOT HOW MANY APPRENTICES THEY HAVE RECRUITED.

The number set by head office?	1
Or do you recommend the number but head office has to approve it?	2
Or do you have complete autonomy at this site on this decision?	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

ASK ALL

- B7 **When you have been looking to recruit new apprentices, have you used the government's Recruit an apprentice service?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / Can't remember	3

ASK IF USED APPRENTICESHIP VACANCIES (B7 = 1)

- B8 **How satisfied were you with the Recruit an apprentice service? Please use a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very dissatisfied, 5 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 is very satisfied.**

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 10

WRITE IN NUMBER	_____
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	1

ASK IF DISSATISFIED WITH APPRENTICESHIP VACANCIES (B8 = 0-4)

B9 **Why were you dissatisfied with the Recruit an apprentice service?**

<i>WRITE IN</i>	
Don't know / Can't remember	1
Refused	2

ASK ALL

B10 **Now thinking more generally, do you feel there is sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering Apprenticeships?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Can't remember / someone else made the decision	3

ASK IF NO (B10=2)

B11 What information, support and guidance do you think is missing?

*DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE AS TO SPECIFIC TYPES OF INFORMATION / ADVICE.
MULTICODE.*

What funding is available and how get it	1
How to recruit apprentices	2
How to set up training for Apprentices	3
Understanding the requirements and benefits of an Apprenticeship	4
How to find suitable training providers	5
How to deliver the qualifications	6
Legal obligations / employment contracts	7
Who to approach / how to get information on Apprenticeships	8
Personal advice and support	9
Information about the level of fees / payments for Apprenticeships	10
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	11
Don't know	12

ASK ALL

B11A **Our records show that between June 2015 and January 2016 you had <TOTFIN> Apprentice(s) who completed training in [IF HASDETAIL = 1:<COMBINEDTITLES>][IF HASDETAIL = 2:<BROADFRAMES>] at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]. Is that correct?**

IF <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: Again, we only want to include training provided to your own employees.

IF NECESSARY: This number would include employees who completed their Level 2 apprenticeship and moved straight on to Level 3 at that time.

IF NECESSARY: According to government records, at least some of the training completed by your employees in [IF HASDETAIL = 1:<COMBINEDTITLES>][IF HASDETAIL = 2:<BROADFRAMES>] between June 2015 and January 2016 was recognised by the government as an apprenticeship.

ADD IF NECESSARY ONLY: This figure has been calculated from information held on the Individualised Learner Record, or ILR. The ILR is a database of all government-backed Further Education courses, including apprenticeships that take place in England. Our client, DfE, has allowed us access to it for the purposes of this research only.

PLEASE ENSURE RESPONDENT IS TALKING ABOUT THE NUMBER OF FINISHERS DURING THE PERIOD JUNE 2015 – JANUARY 2016. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No (PLEASE SPECIFY NUMBER) DS: ALLOW 1 TO 99999	2	WRITE TO <TOTFIN> SET HASDETAIL = 2
Zero <i>INTERVIEWER: IF THEY SAY THIS PLEASE USE PROBES ABOVE TO ENSURE THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING.</i>	3	SET HASDETAIL = 2 THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	4	

ASK ALL

B12 I would now like to ask you some questions about [IF TOTFIN = 1: the apprentice][IF TOTFIN >= 2: these <TOTFIN> Apprentices] who completed training at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] between June 2015 and January 2016. [IF TOTFIN >= 2:Were any...][IF TOTFIN = 1:Were they...]

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

DS: IF TOTFIN = 1, SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away	1
Recruited with the intention that they would start an Apprenticeship, but the training didn't start straight away	2
Or existing employees that were already working for you	3
DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

ASK IF TRAINING DIDN'T START STRAIGHT AWAY (B12=2)

B12A Why did their training not start straight away?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Induction / Probation period	1
Delays in finding a suitable training provider	2
Had to wait for external funding	3
Had to wait until we had the money available	4
To ensure the employee is suitable / capable of progressing in our industry	5
To give employee time to become familiarised with the organisation / the role	6
Apprenticeship timings dictated by training provider / college	7
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8
Don't know / Can't remember	9

IF B12 MULTICODED AND TOTFIN >= 2 (RECRUITED IN MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY AND MORE THAN ONE APPRENTICE)

B13 **Of the <TOTFIN> apprentice(s) who completed training between June 2015 and January 2016, roughly how many were...**

WRITE IN NUMBERS.

DS: ALLOW 1 TO TOTFIN IN EACH. DISALLOW IF B13_1 + B13_2 > TOTFIN.

DS: SUM NOT TO EXCEED <TOTFIN>	Number	Don't know
IF B12 = 1: _1 Recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away?	_____	1
IF (B12 = 2 AND B12 ≠ 1) OR (B12 = 1 AND 2 AND 3): _2 [IF B12 = 1: And roughly how many were r][IF B12 ≠ 1: R ecruited with the intention that they would start an Apprenticeship, but the training didn't start straight away?	_____	1

B13A_DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Number recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away

IF B12 \neq 1	= 0
IF B12 = 1 ONLY	= TOTFIN
IF B12 = 1 MULTICODED	IF B13_1 NUMERIC, = B13_1 IF B13_1 = DK, = 0

B13B_DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Number recruited with the intention that they would start an Apprenticeship, but the training didn't start straight away

IF B12 \neq 2	= 0
IF B12 = 2 ONLY	= TOTFIN
IF B12 = 1 AND 2 ONLY, AND B13_1 \neq DK	= TOTFIN – B13_1
IF B12 = 1 AND 2 ONLY, AND B13_1 = DK	= 0
IF B12 = 2 AND 3	IF B13_2 NUMERIC, = B13_2 IF B13_2 = DK, = 0

B13C_DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Number which were existing employees already working for the company

IF B12 \neq 3	= 0
IF B12 = 3 ONLY	= TOTFIN
IF B12 = 3 MULTICODED, AND B13_1 \neq DK AND B13_2 \neq DK	= TOTFIN – (B13_1 + B13_2)
IF B12 = 3 MULTICODED, AND (B13_1 = DK OR B13_2 = DK)	= 0

ASK IF 2+ RECRUITED SPECIFICALLY (B12 = 1 OR 2 AND (B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM > 1 OR B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0))

B14 **Of [IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM > 1:the <B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM>][IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0:those] recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, roughly how many, if any, were recruited on a fixed-term contract for the period of the Apprenticeship?**

ADD IF NECESSARY: A 'fixed-term contract' is an employment contract that ends on a particular date, or after a set time period

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM. IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0, ALLOW 0 TO TOTFIN.

WRITE IN NUMBER	_____
Some but don't know the number	1
Don't know if any were recruited on fixed term contracts	2

ASK IF ONE RECRUITED SPECIFICALLY (B12 = 1 OR 2 AND (B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM) = 1)

B14A **Was the Apprentice recruited on a fixed-term contract for the period of the Apprenticeship?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL WHO OFFERED TO EXISTING EMPLOYEES (B12 = 3)

B15 **And thinking about the staff who were already working for you when they started their Apprenticeship, were they doing the Apprenticeship to prepare for moving into a new job role, or to improve their skills in their existing job, or both?**

SINGLE CODE.

To prepare for a new job role	1
To improve skills in existing job	2
Both	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Accrediting existing skills	4
Don't know	5

C Apprentice completion and retention

C1 QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

C2 [IF TOTFIN = 1: **Is the Apprentice who completed training in [IF HASDETAIL = 1:<COMBINEDTITLES>][IF HASDETAIL = 2:<BROADFRAMES>] in the June 2015 to January 2016 period still working for your organisation?**
[IF TOTFIN >= 2: **Are all, none, or some of the Apprentices who completed training in [IF HASDETAIL = 1:<COMBINEDTITLES>][IF HASDETAIL = 2:<BROADFRAMES>] in the June 2015 to January 2016 period still working for your organisation?**

[IF A4 = 2 OR 3: **This could be at another part of your organisation.**]

SINGLE CODE.

Yes (all still with us)	1	Section D
No (none are still with us)	2	ASK C2A
IF TOTFIN >= 2: Some still with us	3	
Don't know	4	Section D

ASK IF SOME APPRENTICES NO LONGER WITH THEM (C2 = 2 OR 3)

C2A **When the apprentices left, was the situation that...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Your organisation decided not to offer them an ongoing role	1
They decided to leave of their own accord	2
IF TOTFIN >= 2: Or both	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

IF ANY LEFT OF THEIR OWN ACCORD (C2A= 2 or 3)

C3A [IF C2A=3:**Thinking of those who you offered an ongoing role to, w**][IF C2A = 2 :**W**hy did they decide to leave?

IF THEY FOUND ANOTHER JOB, PROBE: Why do you think they preferred the other job?

IF THEY DIDN'T LIKE THE ROLE OFFERED, PROBE: Why didn't they like it?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Wanted higher pay	1
Wanted to go into another sector	2
Wanted promotion / career prospects	3
Left to go to university	4
Left to do training (other than university)	5
Wanted to move away	6
Didn't like working long hours / hard work	7
Personal reasons, including family, health, maternity	8
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	9
Don't know	10
Refused	11

IF ANY NOT OFFERED A JOB (C2A = 1 or 3)

C3B [IF C2A =3:**Thinking of those who you couldn't or didn't offer an ongoing role to, w**][IF C2A=1:**W**]**hy was this?**

IF THEIR CONTRACT ENDED, PROBE: Why did you decide not to renew the contract?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

There were better candidates	1
Couldn't afford it	2
Not enough work on	3
Not performing to the standard we demand / dismissed / sacked	4
Didn't complete their training / dropped out	5
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6
Don't know	7
Refused	8

C3 QUESTION DELETED

D Progression from Advanced to Higher Apprenticeships

ASK ALL

- D1 **How much, if at all, do you feel you know about Higher Apprenticeships – these are Apprenticeships at Level 4 or higher, including Foundation Degree and Degree level?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

DS: REVERSE THE CODES 50% OF THE TIME

A great deal	1
A fair amount	2
Just a little	3
Heard of but know nothing about	4
Never heard of	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

ASK ALL

- D2 **Does your organisation currently offer any of the following qualifications?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

A Higher Apprenticeship	1
A Degree Apprenticeship	2
A Higher National Certificate (HNC)	3
A Foundation Degree	4
A Degree other than a Foundation Degree or Degree Apprenticeship	5
Some other form of higher level training leading to a qualification	6
Or none of these	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8

ASK IF DON'T OFFER PROGRESSION TO LEVEL 4 (IF D2 = 7)

D3 **Why do you not offer these higher level qualifications?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

There is no demand from employees	1
Lack of funding	2
As an organisation we have not progressed this far with the Apprenticeship scheme	3
We prefer to recruit graduates / use a Graduate Training Scheme	4
Higher level qualifications are not required to do the job	5
Was not aware of higher level qualifications	6
There are no higher level qualifications in my sector / for this type of work	7
We leave it up to employees to fund / arrange their own training at that level	8
Other [SPECIFY]	9
Don't know	10

OFFERHIGHER **SAMPLE VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK**

Yes	1	D2 = 1 TO 6
No	2	D2 ≠ 1 TO 6

IF OFFERHIGHER = 1 (IF DO OFFER PROGRESSION TO LEVEL 4)

D4 **Why do you offer these higher level qualifications?**

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

It is part of our staff retention strategy	1
Funding is available to pay towards it	2
We offer progression as part of our workforce development strategy	3
Higher level qualifications are required for promotion / moving to a management role	4
Other [SPECIFY]	5
Don't know	6

IF OFFERHIGHER = 1 (DO OFFER PROGRESSION TO LEVEL 4)

- D5 **And have any of your apprentices who completed an Advanced Apprenticeship at Level 3 actually gone on to do any of the following qualifications while working for your organisation? [IF A4 = 2 OR 3: This could be at another part of your organisation.]**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

	Yes	No	Don't know
IF D2 = 1: _1 A Higher Apprenticeship	1	2	3
IF D2 = 2: _2 A Degree Apprenticeship	1	2	3
IF D2 = 3: _3 A Higher National Certificate (HNC)	1	2	3
IF D2 = 4: _4 A Foundation Degree	1	2	3
IF D2 = 5: _5 A Degree, other than a Foundation Degree or Degree Apprenticeship	1	2	3
IF D2 = 6: _6 Some other form of higher level training leading to a qualification	1	2	3

ASK ALL

- D6 **How relevant do you think Higher Apprenticeships [IF D5_1 ≠ 1 AND D5_2 ≠ 1:might be][IF D5_1 = 1 OR D5_2 = 1:are] for your organisation?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very	1
Quite	2
Not very	3
Not at all	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

E Perceptions of, and satisfaction, with Apprenticeships

READ OUT TO ALL

We'd now like to ask about one of your Apprenticeship programmes at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] in more detail.

IF A <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: Again, we only want to include training provided to your own employees.

ASK IF FRAMECOUNT > 1 AND S4 ≠ 2

E1 Which one of the following programmes do you consider to be most important to your business at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF NONE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT, ASK FOR THE ONE WITH THE MOST RECENT COMPLETER.

DS: SHOW ALL <FRAMEWORK> CODES SELECTED FOR EMPLOYER	
Don't know / Refused	

DS: IF FRAMECOUNT = 1, SET E1 TO THE ONLY <FRAMEWORK> CODE SELECTED.

SPECIFICFRAME DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK	
= LABEL OF RESPONSE TO E1	
BROADFRAME_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK	
= LOOKUP FROM RESPONSE TO E1 ON SEPARATE SPREADSHEET – N.B. CODES USED ARE THE SAME AS MAINBROADFRAME	

ASK IF S4 = 2

E1X Which single apprenticeship programme do you consider to be most important to your business at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF NONE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT, ASK FOR THE ONE WITH THE MOST RECENT COMPLETER.

WRITE IN	
Don't know / Refused	1

DS: WRITE E1X TEXT TO <SPECIFICFRAME>. IF E1X = CODE 1, GO TO F1.

ASK ALL

E1A **Which level of apprenticeship would you say was most important to your business, within your <SPECIFICFRAME> apprenticeship? Would it be...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Level 2, or Intermediate	1
Level 3, or Advanced	2
Level 4 or 5, including Higher Apprenticeships	3
Level 6 or above, including Degree Apprenticeships	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

LEVEL_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Level 2	E1A = 1 OR (E1A = 5 AND APPLEVELES = 1)
Level 3	E1A = 2 OR (E1A = 5 AND APPLEVELES = 2 OR 3)
Level 4 or 5 (Higher)	E1A = 3 OR (E1A = 5 AND APPLEVELES = 4)
Level 6 or 7 (Degree)	E1A = 4 OR (E1A = 5 AND APPLEVELES = 5 OR 6)

READ OUT TO ALL

So, in the following section, we'd like to talk about your apprenticeships in <SPECIFICFRAME> at <LEVEL_E> at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site].

ASK ALL

E2 **So, thinking of those apprentices...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

DS: SHOW AS SIX INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

	Yes	No	Don't know
ASK ALL _1 Did they receive training delivered by a training provider either on their or your premises?	1	2	3
ASK ALL _2 Did you as the employer provide formal training sessions as part of the Apprenticeship?	1	2	3
ASK ALL _3 Did a training provider assess the apprentices?	1	2	3
IF E2_3 = NO ASK: _4 Was this assessment done by your own staff?	1	2	3
ASK ALL _5 Were you able to influence the structure, content, delivery or duration of the Apprenticeship training BEFORE the training started	1	2	3
ASK ALL _6 Were you able to influence the delivery and content of the training DURING the period of the Apprenticeship training?	1	2	3

ASK IF E2_5 = 2 OR E2_6 = 2

E3 **And did you want to influence the content and delivery of the training at any stage?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

E4 **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the <LEVEL_E> <SPECIFICFRAME> Apprenticeship programme? Please use a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very dissatisfied, 5 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 is very satisfied.**

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 10

WRITE IN NUMBER	_____
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	1

ASK ALL

- E5 **And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the <LEVEL_E> <SPECIFICFRAME> Apprenticeship? Again, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very dissatisfied, 5 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 is very satisfied.**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: An Apprenticeship framework or standard sets out the requirements for an Apprenticeship programme such as the key skills targets and the qualifications that need to be completed by the apprentice. It also includes information on job roles, entry routes, length of the Apprenticeship, and career paths available upon completion.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 10.

	WRITE IN NUMBER	Don't know
IF RECRUITED EXTERNALLY (B12 = 1 OR 2): _1 The quality of applicants for Apprenticeship positions	_____	1
ASK ALL _2 Your ability to select an Apprenticeship framework relevant to your needs	_____	1
_3 Your ability to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of the Apprenticeship training	_____	1
_4 The amount and complexity of any paperwork and bureaucracy required of you as the employer	_____	1
IF A PROVIDER TRAINS (E2_1=1) _5 The quality of the training delivered by the provider	_____	1
IF A PROVIDER TRAINS (E2_1=1) _6 The support and communication from the provider	_____	1
IF A PROVIDER TRAINS (E2_1=1) _7 How the provider offered training and / or assessment in a flexible way to meet your needs	_____	1
IF A PROVIDER DOES THE ASSESSMENT (E2_3=1) _8 The quality of the assessment carried out by the provider	_____	1

F Employer Benefits

ASK ALL

The following questions cover Apprenticeships at an overall level, rather than any specific frameworks or levels.

F1 THERE IS NO F1

ASK ALL

F2 Which if any of the following benefits has your organisation experienced as a result of offering and training apprentices?

PLEASE NOTE WE ARE STILL ASKING ABOUT THEIR SPECIFIC SITE <LOCATION>.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

DS: ROTATE START.

	Yes	No	DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say
IF A3 = 1 (SEEKING A PROFIT): _1 It has helped us win business	1	2	3	4
_2 Improved productivity	1	2	3	4
_3 A lower overall wage bill	1	2	3	4
_4 It has helped improve staff retention	1	2	3	4
_5 It has improved our ability to attract good staff	1	2	3	4
_6 Brought new ideas to the organisation	1	2	3	4
_7 Improved staff morale	1	2	3	4
_8 Improved our product or service quality	1	2	3	4
_9 Improved our image in the sector	1	2	3	4
_10 It has helped us develop skills that are relevant to the needs of our organisation	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL

- F3 **Was there anything you would have liked to change about the content, structure, delivery or duration of the Apprenticeship training?**

Yes	1	ASK F4
No	2	ASK F5
Don't know	3	

ASK IF WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE CHANGED THE APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING (F3=1)

- F4 **What would you have liked to change?**

PROMPT IF NECESSARY.

INTERVIEWER: Do not accept responses such as "length" because we don't know if they're saying it was too long or too short – similarly "amount of training" or "level of detail" – too much or too little?

IF NECESSARY: Was it too short or too long? / Was there too much or too little?

IF SAY "COURSE CONTENT" OR "NOT SUITED TO OUR NEEDS": What would you have liked to change about the course content? Was the course content too wide-ranging or too narrow?

WRITE IN

- F5 QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

- F6 **And, of those undertaking Apprenticeships with you in the last 2 years, did all of them have Maths or English at GCSE grade A*-C when they started their Apprenticeship?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes, all of them did	1
No, none of them did / only some of them did	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

ASK ALL

F7 **How important do you consider it for your apprentices to have or to achieve A*-C grades in Maths and English? Is it...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Very important	1
Quite important	2
Neither important nor unimportant	3
Not very important	4
Not at all important	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

G Apprenticeships vs. other Work-based learning (WBL) and alternatives; Traineeships and Trailblazers

ASK IF AWARE THAT TRAINING IS AN APPRENTICESHIP (B1_ANY=1 OR 3)

- G1 **Thinking about the people who receive Apprenticeship training at**[IF HRSITE = 1: **your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**], **which ONE of the following best describes why you offer them Apprenticeships rather than other forms of training?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Apprenticeships are the required form of training in this industry	1
They cost us less than the alternatives	2
They are most relevant to the needs of our business	3
They are the best way to aid recruitment and retention	4
They are the most convenient because the training provider handles most of the recruitment	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Another reason [SPECIFY]	6
DO NOT READ OUT: It's decided by Head Office / we don't get any say in the type of training	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8

ASK ALL

- G2 **Besides the training delivered through Apprenticeships, have you funded or arranged any training for employees at**[IF HRSITE = 1: **your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**] **in the last 12 months which led to either a Level 2 or a Level 3 qualification?**

SINGLE CODE.

Level 2 only	1
Level 3 only	2
Both	3
No	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

ASK ALL

- G3 I'd now like to ask you about Traineeships, a Government programme introduced in August 2013. These offer 16 to 24 year olds the opportunity to undertake substantial work experience placements alongside support with basic skills such as Maths and English to help them progress onto an Apprenticeship, or secure sustainable employment.

Which of these best describes your awareness of Government Traineeships?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

You have not heard of these Traineeships	1
You are aware of them but do not know what they are	2
You have some knowledge of what they involve	3
You have a good knowledge of them and what they involve	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

IF HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE (G3 = 3-4)

- G4 Does your business currently participate in the Government Traineeships Programme, either as a provider or by offering work experience placements as part of the programme?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE ASKING ABOUT GOVERNMENT TRAINEESHIP WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS, NOT WORK EXPERIENCE IN GENERAL.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE (G3 = 3-4)

- G4A Did [IF TOTFIN = 1: the Apprentice][IF TOTFIN > 1: any of the Apprentices] that completed between June 2015 and January 2016 at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] undertake an official Government Traineeship with you before starting their Apprenticeship?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF SOME TOOK A TRAINEESHIP (G4A=1 AND TOTFIN >= 2)

- G4B **How many of the <TOTFIN> apprentices that completed between June 2015 and January 2016 at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] undertook an official Government Traineeship?**

DS: ALLOW 1 TO TOTFIN

WRITE IN	
Don't know	1

ASK ALL WHO DON'T CURRENTLY OFFER (G4=2)

- G5 **Does your business plan to offer official Government Traineeships in the future?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

- G6 **I'd now like to ask you about your awareness of the new apprenticeship Standards, where groups of employers known as Trailblazers collaborate to design a new apprenticeship.**

Which of these best describes your awareness of this programme? Have you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Not previously heard of this programme	1
You're aware of it, though not much more than the name	2
You're aware of it and have some knowledge of what it is, or	3
You have a good knowledge of what it is	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

IF G6 = 3 OR 4 (HEARD OF APP STANDARDS)

G7 **How, if at all, has your company been involved with new apprenticeship standards?**

ADD IF NECESSARY OR UNSURE: These are new employer designed occupational standards which have started to replace apprenticeship frameworks.

PROMPT IF NECESSARY: So you've not had any apprentices on the new standards, or been involved in any way in developing them?

PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.

Not involved	1
You've had some apprentices on these standards	2
You've been involved in developing standards	3
You've been consulted on the standards	4
You've been involved in developing assessments	5
In another way (SPECIFY)	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	7

IF G7 = 2-6 (INVOLVED IN APP STANDARDS)

G8 **Do you consider these new apprenticeship standards and assessments to be an improvement over the previous frameworks?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: An apprenticeship framework sets out the requirements for an apprenticeship programme such as the key skills targets and the qualifications that need to be completed by the apprentice. It also includes information on job roles, entry routes, length of the apprenticeship, and career paths available upon completion.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / too early to say	3

IF G6 = 3 OR 4 (HEARD OF APP STANDARDS)

G9 **Do you think you will move to these new apprenticeship standards in the next five years or so?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / too early to say	3

H Future plans and intentions

ASK ALL

H1 **How many apprentices, if any, do you currently have at**[IF HRSITE = 1: **your <LOCATION> site**][IF HRSITE = 2: **this site**], **excluding any who have finished?**

IF A <COMPANY> IS A SCHOOL OR SIMILAR, OR THE NUMBER IS TOO HIGH: We only want to include apprentices who are employees of <COMPANY> here.

INTERVIEWER: PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO A5. IF A5 NOT AN EXACT NUMBER, ALLOW 0 TO 999999.

<i>WRITE IN</i>	
None	1
Some but don't know how many	2
Don't know if any	3

HASAPPS DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
Yes	1	H1 >= 1 OR H1 = CODE 2
No / Don't know	2	H1 = 0 OR H1 = CODE 1 OR CODE 3

IF HASAPPS = 1 (CURRENTLY HAVE APPRENTICES)

H2 **Are they undertaking Apprenticeships at any of the following levels?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Level 2	1
Level 3	2
Level 4	3
Level 5	4
Degree Apprenticeships at Level 6 or 7	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF HASAPPS = 1 (CURRENTLY HAVE APPRENTICES)

H3 **In terms of the age of your current apprentices when they started, were any...**

[IF H1 >= 2 OR H1 = CODE 2: *READ OUT. MULTICODE.*][IF H1 = 1: *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*]

16-18 years	1
19-24 years	2
25 years or older	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

ASK ALL

H4 **Which of the following best describes how you would speak about Apprenticeships to other employers?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

I would recommend them without being asked	1
I would recommend them if asked	2
I would be neutral	3
I would recommend against them if asked	4
I would recommend against them without being asked	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF HASAPPS = 1 (CURRENTLY HAVE APPRENTICES)

H5 **Have you paid fees to a training provider for the cost of the training for your current apprentices?**

Yes	1	CHECK H6
No	2	CHECK H7
Don't know	3	

ASK IF H5 = 1 AND MULTICODE AT H3

H6 **And which age groups of apprentices have you paid fees for?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

DS:

IF H3 IS SINGLE CODED AND H5 = 1 (ONE AGE GROUP), FORCE H6 = H3.

IF H3 = 4 OR H5 = 3 (DK), FORCE H6 = 5.

IF H5 = 2 (NO FEES), FORCE H6 = 4.

IF H3 = 1: 16-18 years	1
IF H3 = 2: 19-24 years	2
IF H3 = 3: 25 years or older	3
DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

IF H6 = 1, 2 OR 3 (PAID FEES FOR KNOWN AGE GROUPS)

DS: LOOP H7 FOR EACH SELECTED AT H6

H7 **How much on average do you typically pay to the training provider per year in fees, for each apprentice aged <H6 TEXT>?**

INTERVIEWER: IF UNSURE, ASK FOR BEST ESTIMATE. ENTER TO NEAREST WHOLE POUND. DO NOT INCLUDE £ SIGN.

INTERVIEWER: IF HAVE MULTIPLE LEVELS WITH DIFFERING PAY, PLEASE TAKE THE AVERAGE ACROSS ALL LEVELS FOR THAT AGE GROUP

DS: ALLOW 0 – 50,000 FOR EACH NUMBER.

DS:

IF (H3 = 1 AND H6 ≠ 1 AND H6 ≠ 5) OR H5 = 2, FORCE H7_1 = 0

IF (H3 = 2 AND H6 ≠ 2 AND H6 ≠ 5) OR H5 = 2, FORCE H7_2 = 0

IF (H3 = 3 AND H6 ≠ 3 AND H6 ≠ 5) OR H5 = 2, FORCE H7_3 = 0

IF H3 = 1 AND H6 = 5, FORCE H7_1 = CODE 1 (DK)

IF H3 = 2 AND H6 = 5, FORCE H7_2 = CODE 1 (DK)

IF H3 = 3 AND H6 = 5, FORCE H7_3 = CODE 1 (DK)

	IF H6 = 1: 16-18	IF H6 = 2: 19-24	IF H6 = 3: 25+
<i>WRITE IN NUMBER</i>	_____	_____	_____
Don't know / Refused	1	1	1

SHOW IF ANY H7 ITERATION >= 5000

- H7A **Just to be sure – you said the fees paid to the training provider were in some cases £5,000 or more per year for just one apprentice – is this correct? We only want to include fees paid to the training provider here, rather than your own costs or apprentice wages.**

INTERVIEWER: This may occasionally be correct – some unsubsidised, higher level or very technical apprenticeships, for example in engineering, are very expensive.

INTERVIEWER: IF NOT CORRECT, CLICK 'BACK' TO CORRECT FIGURES

SHOW IF ANY H7 ITERATION < 500 AND > 0

- H7B **Just to be sure – you said the fees you paid to the training provider were in some cases less than £500 per apprentice for a whole year – is this correct?**

INTERVIEWER: This may quite often be correct, especially if the course is shorter than a year or the provider plays a minor role – also sometimes fees are subsidised so that they pay only for minor expenses such as an assessment or certificate. If the cost stated is just travel expenses or similar, please input £0 – we only want money paid to the provider.

INTERVIEWER: IF NOT CORRECT, CLICK 'BACK' TO CORRECT FIGURES

ASK ALL

- H8 **Do you plan to continue to offer Apprenticeships?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know / it depends / undecided / reviewing it	3

IF PLAN TO CONTINUE OR UNSURE (H8 = 1 OR 3)

- H9 **Do you expect the number of apprentices at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] over the next 2 to 3 years to...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Increase	1
Decrease	2
Stay at about the same level	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

H10 QUESTION DELETED

H11 QUESTION DELETED

H12 QUESTION DELETED

IF EXPECT NUMBER OF APPRENTICES TO INCREASE (H9=1)

H12A **Why do you expect the number of apprentices at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] to increase?**
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

IF EXPECT NUMBER OF APPRENTICES TO STAY THE SAME (H9=3)

H12B **Why do you not expect the number of apprentices at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] to increase?**
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

IF EXPECT NUMBER OF APPRENTICES TO DECREASE OR STOP OFFERING (H9=2 OR H8=2)

H12C [IF H9 = 2:**Why do you expect the number of apprentices at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site] to decrease?**
[IF H8 = 2:**Why do you expect to stop offering apprenticeships at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]?**
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

H12A		H12B		H12C	
Business growth / we are expanding	1	Content with current number / no business need to increase	1	Business not growing (incl. we are contracting / poor sales)	1
Good way to meet our skill needs	2	Business not growing (incl. we are contracting / poor sales)	2	Bad experience with training providers	2
Apprenticeships are becoming easier to recruit	3	We cannot currently afford to offer more	3	Apprentices have not been of a good enough standard	3
To claim back Apprenticeship Levy payments	4	Training apprentices is expensive	4	Lack of (good) candidates	4
Changes to apprenticeships funding / funding reform	5	Changes to apprenticeships funding / funding reform	5	We cannot currently afford to offer more	5
Increased range of Apprenticeship options (incl. Degree Apprenticeships)	6	Prefer other forms of training	6	Red tape / bureaucracy	6
We have been encouraged to do so by other organisations	7	Prefer to recruit experienced staff	7	We will have to start paying for apprenticeships	7
Introduction of Apprenticeship Standards	8	All our staff are fully skilled	8	Changes to apprenticeships funding / funding reform	8
Due to high staff turnover	9	We are not looking to recruit new staff	9	Prefer other forms of training	9
		Due to low staff turnover	10	Prefer to recruit experienced staff	10
				All our staff are fully skilled	11
				We are not looking to recruit new staff	12
				Due to low staff turnover	13
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	14	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	14	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	14
Don't know	15	Don't know	15	Don't know	15

H13 QUESTION MOVED TO H3A

ASK ALL

H14 **Are you aware that the way apprenticeships are being funded in England is changing from May 2017?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT ASKS IF THIS INCLUDES THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY – SAY YES (AND CODE YES). IF SAYS HAVE HEARD OF CHANGES BUT DOESN'T KNOW OF THE DETAILS CODE AS A YES.

Yes	1
No / Don't know	2

IF H14 = 1 (AWARE OF CHANGES)

H15 **Which of the following planned changes were you aware of?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

The introduction of an apprenticeship levy for employers	1
<i>READ OUT ONLY IF AWARE OF LEVY:</i> That the levy will apply only to employers with a UK wage bill of more than £3m	2
<i>READ OUT ONLY IF AWARE OF LEVY:</i> That the levy will be 0.5% of their wage bill	3
<i>READ OUT ONLY IF AWARE OF LEVY:</i> That employers paying the levy will be able to claim it back to fund apprenticeship training	4
<i>READ OUT TO ALL: That employers not paying the levy will need to make a 10% contribution toward the cost of an apprenticeship</i>	5
<i>READ OUT TO ALL: That training providers receive a premium for recruiting apprentices from deprived areas</i>	6
DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above	7

IF H14 = 2 (NOT HEARD OF CHANGES) OR H15 ≠ 1 (UNAWARE OF LEVY)

For employers with a wage bill of over £3m, the government is introducing an apprenticeship levy of 0.5% of their wage bill, which they will be able to claim back to fund apprenticeship training.

IF H14 = 2 (NOT HEARD OF CHANGES)

For non-levy payers wanting to train apprentices, and for levy payers wanting to invest more in apprenticeship training than they hold in their apprenticeship account, employers will need to make a 10% contribution toward the cost of an apprenticeship.

IF H14 = 2 (NOT HEARD OF CHANGES)

H15A **Now we have mentioned some of the main apprenticeship funding changes, do you recall having heard of any of them?**

Yes	1
No / Don't know	2

IF HAVE 10 OR MORE EMPLOYEES (A6A=4 TO 10 OR A5A = 4 TO 10)

H15B **Does your organisation have a payroll wage bill of over £3m, across the UK?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: This is for the whole organisation across the whole of the UK.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3
Refused	4

ASK ALL

H16 **How well prepared do you think your organisation is for the likely impacts of the apprenticeship funding reforms, including those changes we just mentioned? Would you say it is...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very well prepared	1
Fairly well prepared	2
Not particularly prepared	3
Not at all prepared	4
DO NOT READ OUT: There would be no impact on us / No need to prepare	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF H16 = 3 OR 4 (NOT WELL PREPARED)

H17 **Why do you say that? PROBE: What aspects do you not feel well prepared for?**

<i>WRITE IN</i>		
Don't know	1	
Because unaware of the funding reforms	2	

IF H16 = 1 TO 3 (AT LEAST SOMEWHAT PREPARED)

H18 **Now I'd like to ask about what specifically your organisation has been able to do to prepare for these funding reforms. Has your organisation...**

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW

	Yes	No	Don't know
Worked out the likely impact on your business	1	2	3
Worked out broadly what you'll do in response	1	2	3
Made a detailed plan for how you will respond to the changes, or modified your existing plans	1	2	3
Started to make changes already	1	2	3

ASK IF AWARE AND NOT STOPPING PROVISION (ASK IF H15A ≠ 2 AND H8 ≠ 2)

H19 **We are interested to know what effect you think the apprenticeship funding reforms will have on the provision of apprenticeships at [IF HRSITE = 1: this site][IF HRSITE = 2: your <LOCATION> site]. Please exclude changes you will or might make for other reasons.**

So, do you think because of the apprenticeship funding reforms the following will increase, remain unchanged, decrease or stop altogether?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW

	Increase / (start providing)	Remain unchanged	Decrease	Stop altogether	Don't provide anyway	Don't know
The overall number of apprentices you train	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF H15A ≠ 2 (AWARE OF CHANGES)

H19B [IF H8 = 2: **We are also interested to know what effect you think the apprenticeship funding reforms will have on the provision of training other than apprenticeships at [IF HRSITE = 1: this site][IF HRSITE = 2: your <LOCATION> site]. Please exclude changes you will or might make for other reasons.**

So, do you think because of the apprenticeship funding reforms your non-apprenticeship training will increase, remain unchanged, decrease or stop altogether?

[IF H8 ≠ 2: *IF NECESSARY*: **And will the following increase, remain unchanged, decrease or stop altogether due to the apprenticeship funding reforms? Please exclude changes you will or might make for other reasons.**]

READ OUT: SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

	Increase / (start providing)	Remain unchanged	Decrease	Stop altogether	Don't provide anyway	Don't know
The amount of non-apprenticeship training that you provide	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF (H19 = 1 TO 3) AND H15A ≠ 2 AND H8 ≠ 2 (AWARE AND NOT STOPPING PROVISION)

H19A *IF NECESSARY*: **And will the following increase, remain unchanged, decrease or stop altogether due to the apprenticeship funding reforms? Please exclude changes you will or might make for other reasons.**

READ OUT: SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

	Increase / (start providing)	Remain unchanged	Decrease	Stop altogether	Don't provide anyway	Don't know
The number of existing employees put on apprenticeship training	1	2	3	4	5	6
The number of people you recruit to start an apprenticeship	1	2	3	4	5	6
The number of managers put on apprenticeship training	1	2	3	4	5	6
Apprenticeships in subjects relating to activities outside your core business; this might be in areas such as customer service, accounting or IT	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF H19 ≠ 4 OR 5 AND H15A ≠ 2 AND H8 ≠ 2 (AWARE AND NOT STOPPING PROVISION)

H19C **You said that the apprenticeship funding reforms would [IF H19= 3:reduce][IF H19=2:have no impact on][IF H19=1:increase] the number of apprenticeships you provide. Would that apply to all levels of apprenticeship?**

Yes (or only provide one level)	1
No (affects only some levels / some differently to others)	2
Don't know	3

IF H19C = 2 (SOME LEVELS AFFECTED MORE THAN OTHERS)

H19D **So will the following levels of apprenticeship increase, remain unchanged, decrease or stop altogether due to the funding reforms? IF NECESSARY: Please exclude changes you will or might make for other reasons.**

DS: IF H19C = 1 OR H19 = 4 FORCE ALL ITERATIONS AT H19C WHICH ARE ALSO SELECTED AT H2 TO OPTION CHOSEN AT H19.

	Increase / (start providing)	Remain unchanged	Decrease	Stop altogether	Don't provide anyway	Don't know
Level 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 5	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 6 or 7	1	2	3	4	5	6

I Closing Questions

ASK ALL

- I1 **Thank you, we are now at the end of the survey. Before I finish, can I check whether you would like a summary of the findings from this survey?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

- I2 **The Department for Education (DfE) may wish to undertake follow-up research. Would it be OK for them or their appointed contractors to re-contact you to invite you to take part?**

Yes	1
No	2

IF I2 = 1

- I3 **And for that follow-up research, would it be OK for us to share your responses to this survey with DfE or their appointed contractors, linked to your name and company?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

- I4 **Finally, it is sometimes possible to link the data we have collected with other government surveys or datasets to enable further statistical analysis. Your confidentiality will be maintained, and linked data will be anonymised and only used for statistical purposes. Would you be happy for this to be done?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

- I5 **Thank you very much for taking the time to speak to us today. Would you be willing for us to call you back regarding this particular study, if we need to clarify any of the information?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

- I4A **Can I just confirm your details**[IF I1 ≠ 1 AND I2 ≠ 1 AND I5 ≠ 1: **so we can ensure we don't contact you again for this survey**][IF I1 = 1 OR I2 = 1 OR I5 = 1: **so that we can contact you as we just agreed**]?

INTERVIEWER: CORRECT OR BLANK ANY INCORRECT INFO.

DS: PRE-POPULATE WITH SAMPLE VARIABLES. ALLOW BLANK RESPONSES.

Company Name: <i>WRITE IN</i>	<COMPANY>
Name: <i>WRITE IN</i>	<CONTACT>
Job title: <i>WRITE IN</i>	<JOBTITLE>
IF I1 = 1 OR I2 = 1 OR I5 = 1: Email address: <i>WRITE IN</i>	<EMAIL>
IF I1 = 1 OR I2 = 1 OR I5 = 1: Phone number: <i>WRITE IN</i>	<PHONENUMBER>

- I6 QUESTION DELETED

SAY TO ALL

- I7 **I hereby confirm that this interview has been carried out in accordance with the rules of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct.**

Yes	1	
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THANK AND CLOSE INTERVIEW
Finally I would just like to confirm that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. Thank you very much for your help today.



Department
for Education

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